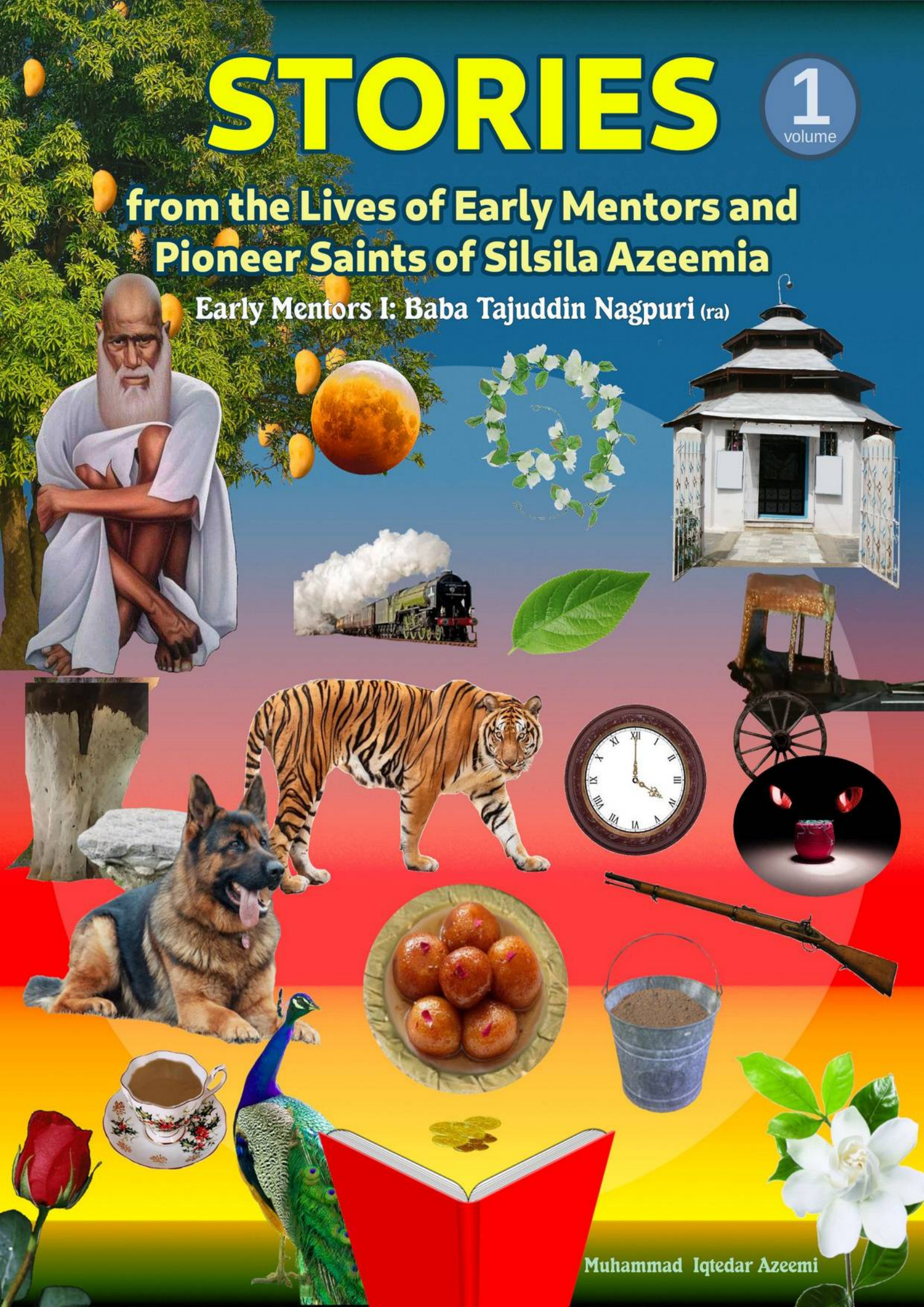
STORIES

1 volume

from the Lives of Early Mentors and Pioneer Saints of Silsila Azeemia

Early Mentors I: Baba Tajuddin Nagpuri (ra)



Muhammad Iqtedar Azeemi

Stories from the Lives of Early Mentors and Pioneer Saints of Silsila Azeemia – Volume 1

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Stories from the Lives of Early Mentors and Pioneer Saints of Silsila Azeemia

Volume 1 of 3 (229 Episodes)

Early Mentors I: Baba Tajuddin Nagpuri (ra)

رُبَّ أَشْعَثَ مَدْفُوعٍ بِالأَبْوَابِ لَوْ أَقْسَمَ عَلَى اللَّهِ لأَبَرَّهُ

Rubba ash'atha madfu' bil-abwāb law aqsama 'alallāhi lil-abarrah

Many a people with dishevelled hair (due to being a majzub) are driven away from the door (due to abhorrence, but they are so pious) that if they swear in God's name (e.g., request Him for something), He definitely fulfils it (because God loves them so much).

Hadith Nabawi, Sahih Muslim, Hadith No. 2854 (Book 53, Hadith 59),
Reported by Abu Huraira (ra)

All frameless, captioned images are actual photos, framed ones are various other artists' impressions, and the rest are the author's illustrations.

Raja Muhammad Iqtedar Azeemi

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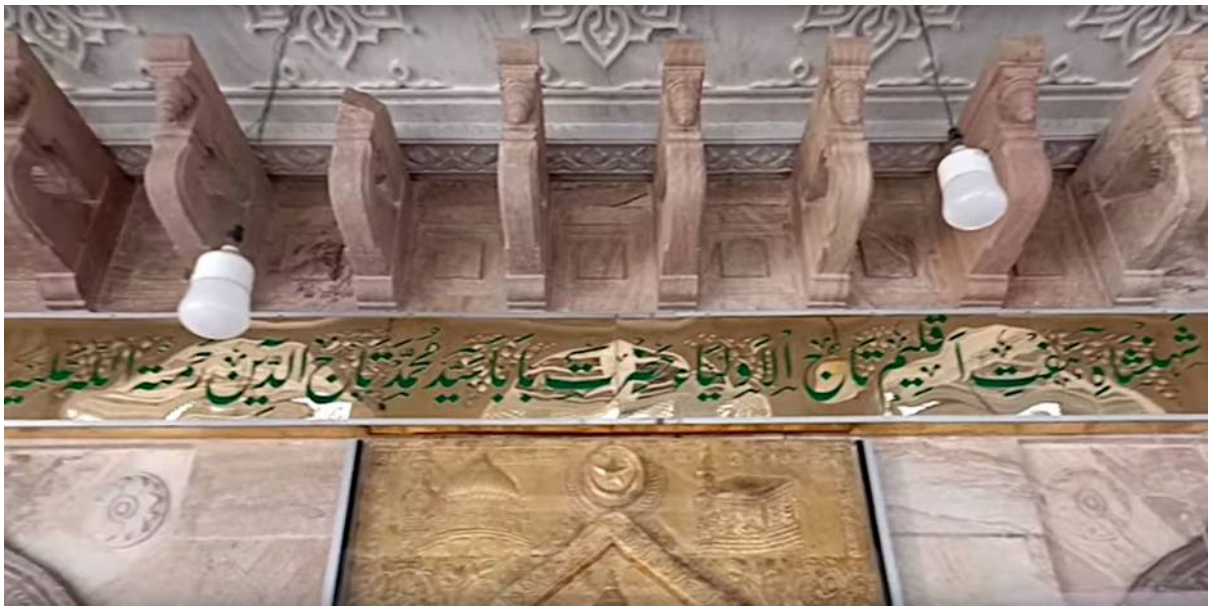
True Stories from the Life of

Baba Tajuddin of Nagpur

Baba Tajuddin Nagpuri (ra) (1861-1925) was a renowned spiritual master in Nagpur, in India's state of Maharashtra. Known by several epithets, he was also described as “the teacher of teachers, the knower of divine secrets”. Although often presented as a jalaali saint, he also had a much softer and compassionate side. He was a descendant of Hazrat Imam Hassan Askari through Fazil Mahdi Abdullah Arab, who migrated to Hind (India) during the rule of the Mughal dynasty. He was the cousin of the maternal grandfather of Qalandar Baba Awliya (QBA), the founder of Silsila Azeemia, to whom he was called 'Nana' since Tajuddin had adopted his mother.

Names and Epithets

An inscription above the main entrance of Baba Tajuddin's (ra) darbar that leads to his qabar mubarak refers to him as: Shahenshah Haft Aqleem, Tajul-Awliya, Hazrat Baba Sayyad Muhammad Tajuddin (ra).



Inscription above the door of Baba Tajuddin's darbar that leads to his qabar mubarak

Chiraghuddin	Lamp of the Faith (reflecting his qualities manifested at birth [see The Glowing Moon Lamp])
Dasmalu	Slave of God (pen name as a poet [see Fondness for Poetry and Naats])
Shahenshah Haft Aqleem	Emperor of the Seven Zones (in honour of his *imaamat* in Madinah for 21 days [see A Portal to Afghanistan] and being a deputy of Prophet Muhammad (uwbp) with respect to control and administration of all seven cosmic realms of the universe)
Sher Tajuddin	Tajuddin the Tiger (expressing his close connection with tigers [see The Lone Vagabond])
Siraj as-Salikeen	Sun of Spiritual Seekers (owing to him being a guiding light for many spiritual seekers and promise to make 125,000 saints [see Ocean of Spiritual Grace and Promises and Arrangements])
Taj al-Arifeen	Crown of Gnostics (indicating his status among gnostics in general)
Taj-ul-Muluk	Crown of All Domains (indicating his status within the higher realms)
Taj-ul-Millat wal-Din	Crown of the Nation and Faith (indicating his status while he was in charge of Hindustan in particular and the Muslim *ummah* generally [see In Charge of Hindustan])

Tajul-Awliya	Crown of Sufi Saints (indicating his status among Muslim saints in general)

Tajuddin, Baba Tajuddin, Tajuddin Baba, Taj Baba, Baba Sahib, Babaji, Baba, saint, master, spiritual master, Chiraghuddin, Crown of Saints, etc. mentioned herein all refer to Baba Tauddin Nagpuri, unless indicated otherwise.

Earthly Life (Key Dates)

1861	born into this world (27 January or 25 April)
1879	lost home in a flood
1881	joined the army
1884	shifted to Sagar; met Hazrat Dawud Makki; left the army
1892	incarcerated in a lunatic asylum (16, 26, or 27 August)
1908	released from the lunatic asylum (19 July or 21 September)
1920	moved back permanently to the Maharaja's palace in Sakardara
1925	passed away from this world (17 August)

Two possible dates of birth are Sunday 27 January 1861 CE (15 Rajab 1277 AH, more likely), and Sunday 25 April 1852 CE (5 Rajab 1268 AH). The date of passing is accepted to have been Monday 17 August 1925 CE (26 Muharram 1344 AH).

Ancestry

Baba Tajuddin (ra) mentioned his lineage when seeing his hagiography 'Taj Qutbi' being prepared: "I am the grandson of Hazrat Imam Hassan Askari (ra)."

1. **Prophet Muhammad (uwbp)**
2. Hazrat Ali (ra)
3. Imam Hussayn (ra)
4. Imam Zayn al-Abideen (ra)
5. Imam Muhammad Baqir (ra)
6. Imam Jafir Sadiq (ra)
7. Imam Musa Kazim (ra)
8. Imam Musa Raza (ra)
9. Imam Ali Taqi (ra)
10. Imam Hassan Askari (ra)
11. Sayyad Ali Akbar Shah (ra)
12. Sayyad Muhammad Jama Shah (ra)
13. Sayyad Abdullah Shah (ra)
14. Sayyad Hussayn Muhammad Taqi (ra)
15. Sayyad Mahmood Rumi bin Ballaq (ra)
16. Sayyad Fakharuddin Shah (ra)
17. Sayyad Abdullah Shah (ra)
18. Sayyad Hussayn Akbar (ra)
19. Sayyad Hussayn Laqab-e-Mehboob (ra)
20. Sayyad Kamaluddin Bukhari (ra)
21. Sayya Jalaluddin Bukhari (ra)
22. Sayyad Abullah Shah (ra)
23. Sayyad Bahauddin Naqshbandi (ra)
24. Sayyad Allauddin Shah (ra)
25. Sayyad Immaduddin Shah (ra)
26. Sayyad Kamaluddin Shah (ra)
27. Sayyad Nasiruddin Shah (ra)
28. Sayyad Jamal Ahmad Shah (ra)
29. Sayyad Muhiuddin Siya Shah (ra)
30. Sayyad Abdul Qadir Shah (ra)
31. Sayyad Ali Shah (ra)
32. Sayad Haydar Shah (ra)
33. Sayyad Badruddin Shah (ra)
34. **Hazrat Baba Sayyad Muhammad Tajuddin (ra)**

Chain of Silsila Tajia

The spiritual affinities of grace of His Highness, Baba Tajuddin (ra), extends to Prophet Muhammad (uwbp) through Hazrat Abdullah Shah Naushahi Qadri (ra) by physical means [see Never to Hurt Others' Feelings] and Hazrat Baba Dawud Makki Shah Sabiri Chishti (ra) by uwaysi means [see Lessons in the Woods].

Baba Tajuddin's spiritual affinity by physical means	**Baba Tajuddin's spiritual affinity by uwaysi means**
1. **Prophet Muhammad (uwbp)**	1. **Prophet Muhammad (uwbp)**
2. Hazrat Ali (ra)	2. Hazrat Ali (ra)
3. Imam Hussayn (ra)	3. Hassan Basri (ra)
4. Imam Zayn al-Abideen (ra)	4. Abdul Wahid Zayd (ra)
5. Imam Muhammad Baqir (ra)	5. Fazil bin Ayaz (ra)
6. Imam Jafir Sadiq (ra)	6. Ibrahim Adham (ra)
7. Imam Musa Kazim (ra)	7. Khwaja Sadiduddin Huzayfah Marashi (ra)
8. Imam Ali Raza (ra)	8. Hubera Al-Basri (ra)
9. Maruf Karkhi (ra)	9. Mamshad Denwari (ra)
10. Shaykh Safiuddin (ra)	10. Abu Ishaq Shami (ra)
11. Abul-Hassan Siri Saqti (ra)	11. Abu Ahmad Abdal (ra)
12. Junayd Baghdadi (ra)	12. Nasiruddin Abu Yusuf (ra)
13. Abu Bakar Shibli (ra)	13. Qutubuddin Mawdud Chishti (ra)
14. Abdul Wahid bin Abdul Aziz (ra)	14. Haji Shareef Zandani (ra)
15. Abul-Farah Yusuf Tartusi (ra)	15. Khwaja Usman Haruni (ra)
16. Abul-Hassan Hankari (ra)	16. Khwaja Moiuddin Chishti (ra)
17. Abu Saeed Mubarak Makhzumi (ra)	17. Khwaja Qutubuddin Bakhtiar Kaki (ra)
18. Shaykh Abdul Qadir Jilani (ra)	18. Fariduddin Ganjshakar (ra)
19. Abdul Aziz (ra)	19. Makhdum Alauddin Sabir Kaleri (ra)
20. Syed Muhammad Al-Hataak (ra)	20. Khwaja Shamsuddin Turk Panipatti (ra)
21. Sayyad Shamsuddin (ra)	21. Dawud Makki (ra)
22. Sayyad Sharfuddin (ra)	22. **Hazrat Baba Sayyad Muhammad Tajuddin (ra)** (Uwaysi means)
23. Sayyad Zaynuddin (ra)	
24. Sayyad Waliuddin (ra)	
25. Sayyad Nooruddin (ra)	
26. Sayyad Hisamuddin (ra)	
27. Sayyad Nooruddin (ra)	
28. Sayyad Muhammad Darwesh (ra)	
29. Sayyad Qadiri (ra)	
30. Abdul Jaleel (ra)	
31. Sayyad Abdullah Shah (ra)	
32. **Hazrat Baba Sayyad Muhammad Tajuddin (ra)**	

The Glowing Moon Lamp

The moon then turned into a ball, descended, and fell right into her lap, while it kept glowing to light up the whole universe as a lamp.

Maryam Bibi, also called Maryambi, and Ghorun Bibi, the daughter of Shaykh Sayyad Miran Shah Sahib, received glad tidings of a son who would be born to her well before his actual birth. She was destined to become the mother of Tajuddin. She saw in a dream that the moon was shining brightly. Its dazzling moonlight spread all over a vast expanse inhabited by thousands of cities and countless beings of all nations and religions. It exhilarated every mortal with a mystical allure. The moon then turned into a ball, descended, and fell right into her lap while it kept glowing to light up the whole universe as a lamp. When her child was born, it soon became clear that he was the lamp, so one of his titles was '*Chiraghuddin*' (Lamp of the Faith).

Tajuddin was a descendant of Hazrat Imam Hassan Askari through Fazil Mahdi Sayyad Abdullah, who settled in Madras during the Mughal dynasty, and Hassan Mahdi Jalaluddin. They were called the Pir Dadon when living in Kolar and moved when Sayyad Qadir Shah joined the army in Hyderabad as a deputy. He was then stationed in Kamptee when the Kamptee Foundation was formed in 1821 to govern a British garrison town. Kamptee lies near the confluence of the Kanhan, Kolar, and Pench rivers. It is located around ten miles away from the former Nagpur capital of the Maratha Empire, which was lost to the British in 1853. It is now a suburb of Nagpur, which is in the Indian state of Maharashtra. Tajuddin's grandfather, Sayyad Haydar, and father, Sayyad Badruddin Mahdi, also joined the army in Kamptee. Badruddin also served as a subadar in the 32nd Madras Platoon of the British Indian Army in Madras before being posted in Kamptee.

Badruddin's son Tajuddin was born in Sayyad Hayder's house in the early morning of Sunday, 27 January 1861 (15 Rajab 1277 AH), in Gora Bazar, Kamptee, at the time of the *fajr* prayer around 5:15am. It was during the early years of direct British rule in India through its Governor-General, which took hold one year after the Indian revolt against it in 1857. While the British crown was still integrating India as part of its empire as the British Raj, a new crown of saints emerged onto the world scene in the same year when the American Civil War began. The house was situated opposite a mosque.

Sayyyad Haydar's plot where a house once stood in which Baba Tajuddin was born (destroyed by a flood; present view)

Gora Bazaar, Kamptee (left view from Sayyad Haydar's house)

The mosque opposite the house where Tajuddin was born (present view)

Tajuddin's birth and childhood

The moment Tajuddin was born in this world, he was silent, and his eyes were closed. This made the other women present worry that perhaps something was wrong. It was an unusual birth because the baby did not cry as a normal newborn would, so he had to be tortured a little into crying. A heated copper coin was placed on his temples and the soles of his feet. This made him burst out with a short cry before falling silent again, although he now looked around bewilderedly as if he were aware of what was happening. The burn marks on his forehead, temples, and soles remained on his body throughout his earthly life. Tajuddin's maternal grandmother, Ghora Namma, recalled that his mother had a similar condition of a silent birth, but it was when she was placed on a horse that she first opened her eyes.

The entrance to the graveyard where Baba Tajuddin's elders are buried

Sadly, Tajuddin lost both his parents at a young age. He was their only child. His father died before he was one year old while touring Rangoon, probably from malaria, which was prevalent at the time. His mother passed away when he was nine years old. Many such souls become orphans in their early childhood, which helps them quickly mature spiritually. After the death of his parents, he was looked after by his paternal uncle Sayyad Ibrahim. He, too, passed away soon after, so he was then looked after by his maternal grandmother and his maternal uncles, Sayyad Miran Shah and Sayyad Abdul Rahman Shah. The latter worked as a forest contractor for the Forestry Department of the central provincial government.

No Absences to Explain

The teacher was surprised at her concern because he had never observed the lad going outside the class during class time. He had no absences to explain... Tajuddin was able to be present in class while also sometimes returning home with his grandmother.

At the age of six, Tajuddin was enrolled in a local *madrassah* (seminary) in Kamptee run by Maulana Akram-ul-Hassan and Maulana Akram-ul-Haq. Three years later, when tragedy struck with his mother's passing, his maternal grandmother took care of him from then on. He continued his education and studied hard. Another major event happened when he matured. It changed his life for good because it satisfied his innate spiritual thirst.

As a student, Tajuddin was of above-average intellect. He was very interested and engaged in reading and studying, not so much in playing like other children. By the age of 13, besides being well-versed in the Holy Quran and knowing Arabic, Tajuddin also spoke the three foreign languages of Urdu, Persian, and some English.

However, Tajuddin had an uncanny ability to bilocate from a young age. Once, his maternal grandmother complained to the teacher why, after leaving Tajuddin at the school, the teacher allowed him to go back after her. The teacher was surprised at her concern because he had never observed the lad going outside the class during class time. He had no absences to explain. Still, he asked the other students, and they, too, confirmed he was always in class.

This shows that Tajuddin was able to be present in class while also sometimes returning home with his grandmother. So, spiritual qualities were apparent in Tajuddin, but they were left unkindled until he finished his studies. His quiet and aloof nature prompted his maternal grandfather to buy him some pigeons and a horse to keep him amused when he was a little older. He enjoyed horseback riding and was also fond of playing the violin, which he inherited.

Never to Hurt Others' Feelings

"Eat less, sleep less, talk less, and read to study the Holy Quran as if it is being revealed right before you.... Sit in temples, but never hurt the feelings of another."

Tajuddin was in his mid-teens[1] when a life-changing event happened while going to a *madrassah* with his maternal uncle. They met a renowned spiritual master along the way. He was Hazrat Abdullah Shah Baba Naushahi Qadri (d. 1978), who had migrated from Mandi Bahauddin in Punjab. Abdullah Shah immediately recognised the child's spiritual potential. He asked his maternal grandfather why the boy was being taught: "Why is this boy in school? What need is there for him to study? What is there for him to learn?" The saint later clarified to Tajuddin's Arabic teacher:

> *Isko kya parhaate ho? Yeh to azal se parh ke aya ha. Is ka khiyal rakho.*
>
> *What are you teaching him? He has already been taught (divinely inspired knowledge) ('ilm-e-ladunni) from before. Look after him well.*

Abdullah Shah thus made Tajuddin's true status known publicly. He then turned to the child, took out a dried date from his bag, ate half of it, and put the other half into his mouth with the special instruction:

> *Kam khao, kam bolo, kam sau, aur quran shareef ki tilaawat karo, balke tilaawat ke waqt ye samjho ke tumhare saamne quran ka nuzool ho raha ha.*
>
> *Eat less, sleep less, talk less, and read to study the Holy Quran as if it is being revealed right before you.*

As soon as Tajuddin chewed the dried fruit, he was overcome with an intense awareness of God (*taqwa*) and His oneness (*adwaita*). He remained in this blissful state of ecstasy, left the school, and shed tears for three whole days. The gift from the saint aroused in him a spiritual longing for

1 15-16 years old at most

absorption in God. After this blessing, he lost interest in socialising. He became inclined to turn inward to familiarise himself with the inner treasure he had received, so he spent time reflecting and contemplating alone in secluded places.

When Tajuddin regained some normality after this intense experience, he began reading Hafiz Shirazi's 'Divan-e-Hafiz' with fervour. One feeling embedded itself deeply into Tajuddin's heart (*qalb*) while reading it, which was to never hurt anyone. He understood this from the following couplet:

Mae khor, mashaf basoz o aatish andar ka'ba zan,

Saakin but khaana baash o mardam azaadi makan.

Burn holy books, pull down the Ka'ba, and drink liquor,

Sit in temples, but never hurt the feelings of another.

This did not suggest doing the first few things mentioned literally. Rather, the point was to always be wary of the last one, which is to never hurt anyone's feelings or sentiments. This is because of its immense relative importance as a means to please God. Causing distress is one of the worst things one could do to another, and consoling a heart is one of the most desirable because of the heart's connection with God.

While Tajuddin was still a young man, he often presented himself at the service of Hazrat Abdullah Shah. Once, he met him when the time came near for the saint to depart from this world. Haji Miskeen Shah offered a glass of almond milk juice to his master. Abdullah Shah took a sip from it and gave the lad the rest to drink. Hazrat Abdullah Shah Naushahi's shrine is situated near Kamptee railway station.

Darbar of Abdullah Shah Naushahi (present)

Qabar mubarak of Abdullah Shah Naushahi (present)

Youthhood in Absorption of God

After spending his youth in the absorption of God doing the austere exercise, he became even quieter than before, and he preferred being alone in solitude.

During his adolescence, after completing his term at the *madrassah*, Tajuddin went missing one day. He was last seen at the house of his maternal grandfather, Sayyad Miran Shah, who was extremely concerned and searched for him far and wide. Posters were put up around the city, a missing-person notice was placed in the local newspaper, and cash was offered to bring him back. He loved his grandson dearly but eventually had to leave the matter in God's hands. Sadly, it was during this time that Tajuddin's grandfather passed away while waiting for him to return.

While Tajuddin was being missed in the outside world, the young lad spent this period in the woods of Basher doing spiritual exercises. It was situated in an ancient area called Gondwana (land of the Gond people), which was known to be inhabited by many herbalists and magicians. Unbeknown to them, the presence of Tajuddin in their area was the reason their magical powers had become ineffectual. When a field of positive energy pervades, negative energy becomes weakened and ineffective, like how darkness is dispelled in the presence of light. This is what actually happened. Since this activity was also their source of income, they became very worried and sought to find out why this was happening to them. They

Tajuddin in his youth

appealed to their guru to find out the reason and do something to help them regain their powers.

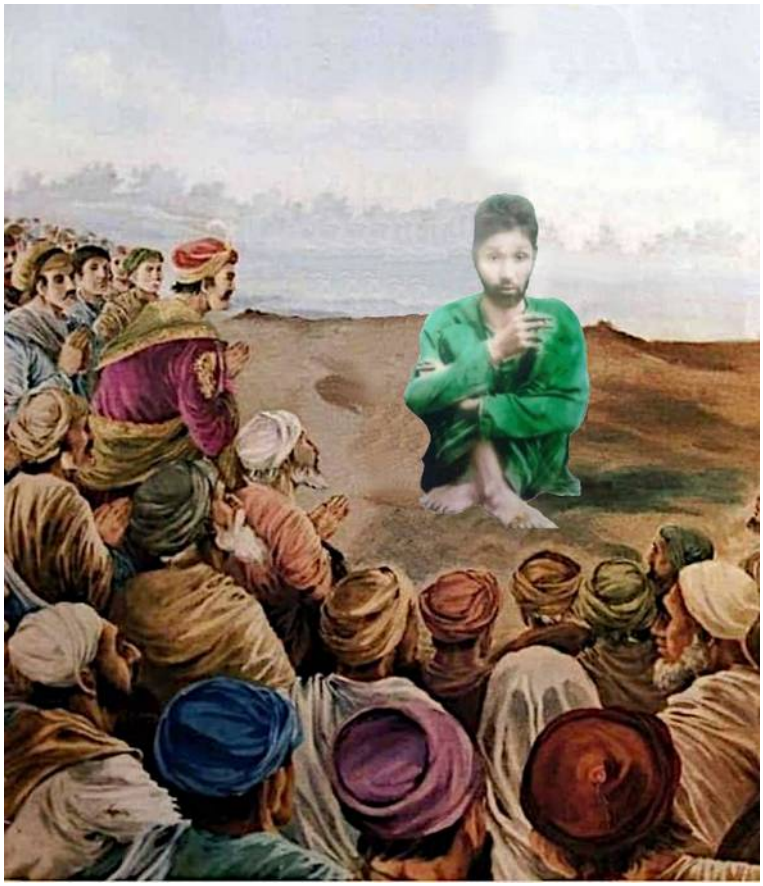
Gondwana (illustration only)

The guru informed the magicians that a young man had entered their area, and it was because of him that their powers were drastically weakened. He also told them that they would find him hanging upside down in the woods, absorbed in the spiritual exercise of *chilla ma'kusa*. After hearing all this, the magicians directed their efforts at casting a spell on the man who had caused them so much trouble to make him leave. When they found that their powers were ineffective in achieving this result, they banded together, but they were still powerless. They encircled their target and tried to overpower him collectively, but their efforts were in vain. Consequently, some magicians were adversely affected by losing some or other abilities, which made them even more worried. Eventually, they realised they were no match for a man of God and gave up.

As per the new advice given by their guru, they now sought forgiveness instead. The group of magicians decided to find the young man of God to pay their obeisance and to learn from someone who proved to be far more powerful than they had first imagined. When they found the tree from which Tajuddin was hanging upside down, to their amazement, those among them who were suffering from some or other ailment were relieved and cured instantly. This marvel made all of them fall on their knees in respect. Since Tajuddin was in an absorbed state, they did not dare to disturb their guest. However, they appointed two among them in turns to remain at the spot in case he needed anything and to safeguard him from anyone who might think of disturbing him.

When Tajuddin came out of his *mast* (intoxicated) state and came down from the tree after two years, news spread throughout the area about what had just happened. People gathered around that tree on all sides,

including women and children. Firstly, they all begged for forgiveness for initially turning against him, and then they asked if they could be of any assistance to him. He forgave all of them. Seeing them become more hospitable, Tajuddin continued his spiritual exercises for two more years at the same spot.



Whenever Tajuddin would come down from the tree, it was an exciting moment for the people gathered there. Gradually, the numbers grew until thousands of people would be seen waiting for a glimpse of the man of God. All of them were eager to do whatever they could for him. Many of them embraced Islam and got themselves initiated at his hands.

Tajuddin was seventeen years old when he left Gondwana and returned to Kamptee. He was saddened to hear that his grandfather had passed away. His maternal grandmother and uncle Abdur Rahman were still very happy to see his nephew return. They all noticed a big change in Tajuddin. After spending his youth in the absorption of God doing the austere exercise, he became even quieter than before, and he preferred being alone in solitude. However, one thing concerned them, which was that he would suddenly utter words that seemed meaningless. In reality, Tajuddin would absorb himself in divine light and meet and converse with *ghaybi* (unseen) creatures.

The Majzoob Soldiers

Kamptee suffered severe damage from heavy rains and flooding of the River Kanhan... The difficult situation compelled Tajuddin to join the army... Tajuddin joined the Madras native infantry as a sepoy.

In 1879, when Tajuddin was 18 years old, heavy rains and flooding of the River Kanhan caused severe damage in Kamptee. Many people lost their homes. The house of his uncle Abdul Rahman, where Tajuddin was living, was completely destroyed, and the flooding washed away all his belongings and those of his relatives. Consequently, he was left in poverty. He was not only affected personally by his own disastrous experience, but the plight of other victims affected him deeply, too.

The difficult situation compelled Tajuddin to join the army, as there was little else he could do. Besides, the army was actively recruiting at the time. However, it took two years after the flood before Tajuddin eventually joined at the age of 20 in 1881 because his maternal grandmother was sad and reluctant for him to go. Meanwhile, his uncle was appointed a manager in the forestry department. Tajuddin joined the Madras native infantry as a sepoy (native soldier) in Kamptee. It was a platoon or sub-division of the 8th Regiment known as the Madrasi platoon[2]. The uniform of seniors was red, laced with gold, and the insignia had an elephant on it. The Madras army was one of the three presidencies of the British Indian Army, which was then commanded by Lieutenant-General Sir Frederick Roberts. It was when British and Indian troops withdrew from Afghanistan one year after a decisive British victory in the Second Anglo-Afghan War.

2 It was likely 8th, but some other sources mention it was the 13th or 32nd regiment.

During his time in the army, Tajuddin travelled extensively throughout the country. His regiment was also sent to France for a brief period. On its return, it was shifted to Hyderabad. Tajuddin was posted at the Bolarum cantonment barracks on a grass farm on the outskirts of Hyderabad Deccan, the headquarters of the Hyderabad Contingent. There, he encountered followers of the saint Shah Afzal Biyabani (1795-1856) who like himself was also a saint by birth, healed many people, performed other miracles, and spent time in states of *majzubiyat* (absorption in God). He had spent 12 years meditating in caves in Battupalli forest, near Kazipet.

Shah Afzal Biyabani

Many of these followers were stationed as sepoys in the Hyderabad Contingent, and it was not uncommon for them to enter states of ecstasy. Another *faqeer* named Bane Miyaan, who served as a soldier, also had followers in the same contingent. As a *faqeer*, he was free of worldly wants. Tajuddin was no less than a *majzoob* (one absorbed in God) himself. His *majzubiyat* was being deeply absorbed in God. Worldly demands made him join the army, but inwardly he was on a spiritual quest. He was considered to be out of his mind much of the time, but he was really an advanced soul.

In the view of the British authorities, Tajuddin was just one more *majzoob*, or mad soldier, because they viewed the condition as no less than insanity. However, his strong physique, tall height (5'9"), and sound health made him ideal for the armed forces. Above all, they admired his simplicity, honesty, and dutifulness and were, therefore, pleased overall.

Tajuddin himself never found solace in working for the army except for his attachment to a British officer named Williams in Hyderabad. The two became very close friends. He mentored Williams and also another American officer named Bennis, but called Ben, who learnt to read the Holy Quran. Both of them were taught spirituality and made great strides in the field later in their lives. The time then came when Tajuddin was reposted elsewhere, and Williams later went to live in Calcutta, where he spent most of his time in a graveyard at Bangmeri.

Lessons in the Woods

The ocean inside him was ready to be poured out to serve humanity... Tajuddin would spend several hours or whole nights... seeking the saint's company in the woods to learn from him...

In 1884, Tajuddin was in a contingent that was shifted to the headquarters of the 8th regiment of the Madras army in Sagar, to the north of Nagpur. Sagar means 'ocean', and the transfer was a calling for Tajuddin to turn the place once more into an ocean of spiritual energy. He arranged for accommodation in Sagar for himself, his maternal grandmother, and other close relatives before heading to Sagar. While other soldiers were busy with military exercises to defend or battle against outside enemies, Tajuddin's actual battle was internal. He kept his routine of prayers and spiritual exercises, but his heart remained restless. Then, the one stirring it eventually called him over.

While on guarding duty in Sagar, Tajuddin was lured by a melodious voice in the woods. Although startled at first, he looked around and then proceeded in the direction of the voice. He went beyond the barracks. Making his way through the woods in the dark, he saw an old man sitting under a tree. It was the Sufi saint Hazrat Dawud Makki Shah Sabiri Chishti, the successor of the Turkistani saint Sayyad Shamsuddin Turk Panipatti, who instructed him to migrate to Sagar 400 years earlier. There, he served humanity from the woods of Sagar, and Tajuddin was likewise destined to do the same in Waki.

Without looking at Tajuddin, the old saint ordered him to bring a cup of tea, so he returned to the barracks to boil a fresh cup of tea. He then returned to the woods and offered it. After sipping only a little, the saint gave the cup back to Tajuddin and ordered him to drink the rest. As soon as he drank it, his inner restlessness turned into an ocean of bliss. That very moment, Tajuddin lost all sense of being present in the world and attained God-realisation when he was around 23 years old. The outside world no longer seemed

significant. Absorption in the ocean of divine love was the only exercise worth pursuing.

While stationed in Sagar, the ocean inside him was ready to be poured out to serve humanity. From then on, Tajuddin would spend several hours or whole nights after his roll ended at nine o'clock seeking the saint's company in the woods to learn from him at his shrine. While his comrades were accustomed to the routine drills of the army, his own routine encompassed spiritual lessons and exercises in the woods every night. However, by increasingly giving more prominence to the latter, Tajuddin's role as a soldier was affected. Being drowned in God and capable of merging with the infinite at any given moment, Tajuddin was a *majzoob*. It took his attention away from being on active duty, so there was a conflict of interest. This unusual behaviour and the fact that he spent nights in the woods convinced his fellows that he had gone mad.

Darbar of Hazrat Dawud Makki Shah Sabiri Chishti (present-day view)

Shrine of Dawud Makki Chishti, inside the entrance (present-day view)

Tomb of Hazrat Dawud Makki Chishti (present-day view)

Concerns over Nightly Sojourns

When she was satisfied that her grandson was worshipping and doing mystical exercises so intensely, she was no longer worried and quietly returned. She left his well-being in the hands of God.

As the concerns over Tajuddin spending nights in the woods grew, the matter came to the attention of his maternal grandmother. When she heard about his nightly sojourns, she thought he might have become affected by bad company, so she came to Sagar to stay with him for a while. She even arranged for his *nikah* (marriage), but when the girl's family came to know about his peculiar state of mind, they broke the engagement.

One day, she gave her grandson breakfast, but he did not eat it, saying he had no need for it. This made her more worried, so she followed him stealthily to see what he did during the night. She saw Tajuddin go through a deserted place and enter a shrine. After a while, she went further to peep inside the shrine. She saw Tajuddin engaged in recitals, *zikr* (remembrance of God), and *muraqba* (meditation). When she was satisfied that her grandson was worshipping and doing mystical exercises so intensely, she was no longer worried and quietly returned. She left his well-being in the hands of God.

From that day on, she prayed for Tajuddin to be successful in what he was doing. With this support, Tajuddin's meditations and other spiritual exercises became more intense, and he made great progress. The only strange behaviour that still bothered her was Tajuddin's preference for eating small stones over real food. The next morning, when she presented breakfast to him after he returned from a night vigil, he revealed he had been chewing the small stones he showed her in his hands. They were like *mithai* (sweetmeat) to him, and he described them as *laddu* and *peda*. She was unable to do anything about this situation. She thought it must be due to some powers he acquired that he was able to do what he did.

Tajuddin predisposed to meditating at a young age

One night, Tajuddin's hard efforts and dedication resulted in his receiving a message in which he heard: "Ask what you ask for (*mang kya mangta ha*)!" Tajuddin replied, "O Allah! I crave you, and only you (*teri hi talab ha*)". The veils of separation were then lifted, and he became engulfed in divine light and gained closeness to God. Tajuddin was trained by Hazrat Dawud Makki to serve humanity. The lessons and spiritual practises at the shrine brought about another profound turning point in his life. He sat to meditate and witness things till the morning when he had to leave to join the parade. He spent almost three years this way at the shrine. During this period, he was initiated into the Chishti Sufi Order by the *uwaysi* (spirit contact) method. The last Prophet of God (uwbp), Hazrat Ali (ra), and Hazrat Uwais Qarni (ra) were instrumental as well in Tajuddin's spiritual training, among others. Even after two years, he continued to visit the shrine at least once or twice a week.

On Duty while Meditating

He was stunned because now he was certain that it was the same soldier on duty who was also deeply engrossed in meditation.

At the military camp back in Kamptee, Tajuddin was once posted to guard the arsenal of the arms depot. He was on duty there at two o'clock one night when an English captain came to check. The captain was satisfied, but when he walked further, about half a furlong, he saw moonlight shining in the courtyard of the mosque. To his surprise, he saw a man whom he was sure was one of his soldiers, engaged in meditation (*muraqba*) with closed eyes.

Tajuddin at a young age

The captain then remembered he had seen the same soldier on duty moments earlier, so he went back to the depot to make sure. Lo and behold, Tajuddin was indeed on duty. The captain was confused seeing the soldier in his place. He thought perhaps he was mistaken and that the meditator must be someone else, so he went back to the courtyard to make sure. The to-and-fro checking was repeated one more time. He was stunned because now he was certain that it was the same soldier on duty who was also deeply engrossed in meditation. The captain was perplexed as to how it was possible for someone to be on duty while meditating elsewhere, causing him to be seen at two places simultaneously. However, he did not disturb Tajuddin, neither while he was on duty nor while he was meditating.

The next day, the captain called Tajuddin before a senior officer to explain what he had witnessed. His concern was: “I saw you last night at two different locations. You must be a special man of God (*Ham samajta ha tum Allah ka koi khaas banda ha. Kal hamne tumhe do do jagge duty karte dekha*).” Tajuddin only smiled, but he looked so majestic that the two officers acknowledged him as a special saint. Since there was nothing lacking in the soldier’s duty to complain about, they were unable to do anything to admonish him. They accepted his ability to remain on duty while meditating at the same time. The only thing that did bother them over time, however, was the increasing prevalence of his *mast* condition (of divine intoxication), which they interpreted as bouts of madness.

The spot (now a room next to the darbar/mosque) where Tajuddin used to meditate (present view)

Tajuddin's meditation spot marked by a platform (present time)

Saving People from Dangers

He was impressed by the calm and saintly personality of the intruder... He was convinced the man had come to save him from some danger... He was their saviour that day.

From a young age, Tajuddin did what he could to save people from various dangers. Once, at the age of 22, while staying in Kamptee and before being sent to a lunatic asylum, Tajuddin suddenly entered the house of a goldsmith. He insisted that he gather his family and valuables and vacate the house immediately. It was a situation of emergency. Although the man hesitated for a moment, not knowing who he was, he was impressed by the calm and saintly personality of the intruder, so he complied without any further delay. He was convinced the man had come to save him from some danger.

A few moments after stepping outside the house with his family, the whole house caught fire and was burned to the ground. Tajuddin thus saved the man's family as well as his valuable possessions. He was their saviour that day. Despite the loss of their house, they were grateful to him for saving them from the danger they were in when they did not know what was about to happen. If the saviour had not come to their rescue, the lives of the whole family would have been at serious risk. Fortunately, no one was hurt. This incident made the goldsmith and his family among his staunch devotees, and it was recognised as the first publicly displayed *karaamat* (miracle) of Tajuddin during his sainthood.

Quitting the Army

Tajuddin eventually decided to leave the British Indian army and quit while undergoing military training... [He] took off his army uniform... and walked out of the military base.

After three years of dutifully working as a soldier while also achieving his own spiritual realisation and enlightenment, Tajuddin was finding it increasingly difficult to manage both roles. He considered the military job to be an impediment to what he really wanted to do, which was to serve humanity. The two roles were clearly incompatible with each other. The military officials viewed him as being 'out of his mind' anyway because they assessed his ecstatic episodes as bouts of madness. He was, therefore, deemed unsuitable for their needs, although they did not intend to dismiss him. Tajuddin eventually decided to leave the British Indian army and quit while undergoing training in 1884 of his own accord.

Tajuddin in the British Indian army (first on left in front row from camera view)

One day, determined to leave, Tajuddin took off his army uniform and clad only in a simple cloth of jute, gave it to his superior with the following words:

> *Loji hazrat, ab do do naukriyan nahi karte ji hazrat. Here you are Sir! I will no longer be performing two jobs together.*

Tajuddin made it clear that he wanted to concentrate on his spiritual and humanitarian role and that leaving the army had become necessary to achieve that. In one last attempt to convince Tajuddin to stay, the lieutenant major told him he was close to being promoted, so it was unwise to leave. However, Tajuddin said he had already made great progress in his other preoccupation and walked out of the military base.

Tajuddin in his army uniform

The officer then alerted Tajuddin's relatives. Sir Zahoor Baig, the father-in-law of Tajuddin's uncle, Abdul Rahman, who was in the same platoon, informed his grandmother as well, who immediately went over to Sagar. After spending some time out of his senses with no concern for food, scantily clad, restless, and wandering as if searching for something, his grandmother eventually managed to bring him back to Kamptee.

Tajuddin lived with his maternal grandmother for some time, but soon, she, too, became convinced that her grandson was out of his mind. He had become too detached from the world and incapable of even dealing with his own basic personal needs. She resorted to giving him medical treatments, but they had no effect on altering his condition. Doctors, spiritual healers, and magicians were unable to do anything to help Tajuddin either. Their medicines and talismans were all futile. They were ineffective in bringing him back into this world. Some people generally regarded him as a madman, but due to the spiritual grace he had received, he attained a high mystical state in which he had lost his sense of self and the world.

The Lone Vagabond

Tajuddin lived like a lone vagabond in Kamptee for around four years... To escape the public mockery and teasing, however, Tajuddin would wander around in the surrounding hills and woods.

Not long after quitting the army, Tajuddin's maternal grandmother died from sadness and grief, unaware of the glorious future that lay ahead for her grandson. Tajuddin became very lonely and had to live alone after her death. He was abandoned by his other relatives for being an incurable lunatic, and he was teased by the locals. He was greatly anguished. In spite of this, he found solace in his *majzubiyat* (absorption in God). Tajuddin's uncle Abdul Rahman took pity on him and took him to live in Chandarpur for a while.

Burial spot of Tajuddin's maternal grandmother, near the shrine of Masum Ali Shah

In the forest of Chanda, Tajuddin roamed by riding a tiger, which made him famous as 'Sher Tajuddin'. His uncle tried to cure him medically and spiritually as well but eventually returned his nephew to Kamptee and abandoned him, leaving him in a state of destitution. It was suspected that perhaps the excessive worship and mystical exercises had created a mental disorder or that he had made a mistake or blunder during his *chilla* (seclusion).

Whatever the cause, his condition was seen as madness in the eyes of the public.

From then on, Tajuddin lived as a lone vagabond in Kamptee for around four years. He loitered under trees, stood out in the sun, and sat on the railway bridge and in abandoned places without caring about the weather. When some people gave him food, he usually passed it on to stray dogs because he considered them more deserving. Foolish ones who failed to recognise his greatness and dignity treated him as if he were worthless and depraved. Children pelted him with stones, except for urchins, but he never stopped them and often endured cuts and bleeding. Instead, he collected the stones to form heaps so they could not be thrown again. He always smiled in their presence, and if anyone dissuaded the children, he would reprove them for interfering. He would say, "*In ko nae manna karte ji, ye to bache han. Ye to phool phankte* (Don't forbid them for they are children. Besides, they are just flowers)." He assured the parents that they were not stones but flowers for him. Rather, they transformed into flowers before touching him. To the adults who hurt his feelings, he would wish them well, saying, "*Achhe rahte* (stay well)". He never responded harshly or cursed anyone.

To escape the public mockery and teasing, however, Tajuddin would often wander around in the surrounding hills and woods. Some other children, mostly those out for an evening stroll with their *ayahs* (nursemaids), would see him and feel frightened. He did what he could to reassure them that, while he may be a lone vagabond, he was neither insane nor a danger to anyone.

During this period of his life, Tajuddin, already established as a spiritual master, was capable of giving spiritual guidance, granting blessings, and even conferring sainthood on others. Once, he conferred sainthood to Baba Abdul Samad from Bhikpur Jaise and gave him the power to heal using water [see The Healing Water].

Respite in a Garden

> The gatherings disturbed Tajuddin because they interfered in his worship and reduced the time available for absorption in the divine... [so] he chose to stay in a British man's garden.

To gain some respite, Tajuddin stayed for a few days in a temple garden house, where people saw him doing interesting pottery. He collected sharp stones and practised resting on them for self-denial. The only people Tajuddin went to of his own accord were a certain Mr Tronger, who was a resident at the cantonment hospital and whose wife he called 'Mai', and a childless Madrasi couple in the evenings. The couple would give him food out of respect and compassion. One day, when he went to their house, as was his routine, he suddenly told them, "Let it fall if it falls, but for now, Tajuddin is here" (*girta ha to gir, ab to Tajuddin ha*). The couple ignored these words because they, too, considered Tajuddin to be mentally disturbed. However, just as he left their house, their roof collapsed. The couple was safe, but it made them think more favourably of him from then on.

Thinking Tajuddin might be a man of God, a few days later, when he came again and was in a pleasant mood, the couple reminded him that they were childless. Tajuddin remained silent, but when the man asked again if he could do something, he said: "Tajuddin blesses you with news of three offspring, one of whom will be a *pandit*". In due course, the couple had three sons, and one later became a *pandit* when he was older. The birth of the sons caused large numbers of people to gather around Tajuddin who had some or other ailment, sickness, or worry.

The gatherings disturbed Tajuddin because they interfered with his worship and reduced the time available for absorption in the divine. For this reason, he chose to stay in a British man's garden because British nationals were feared during the era of the British Empire in India. Initially, not many dared to approach the owner of the house to request permission to meet Tajuddin, but over time, when they found that permission was granted easily, the number of people eager to meet him grew again. Tajuddin then obliged the British man to send him to Nagpur by horsecart.

Regaining Worldly Awareness

He preferred showing how to gain closeness to God... in helping others in their spiritual development... but he found it difficult to achieve this while having to deal with people's problems.

Gradually, more people noticed that Tajuddin was not mad after all in the ordinary sense of the term. However, only Hazrat Dawud Chishti knew what the real issue was, so he helped Tajuddin regain his material worldly awareness. After some time, he eventually started acting 'normal' again. What many people did not know was that he was a highly evolved soul who had become a pivotal saint (*qutub*). This realisation only grew gradually when he became highly regarded in the area, and his *karamaat* (saintly miracles) manifested and were witnessed. It began as a trickle of a few raindrops before spreading and making an impact like a storm.

Tajuddin's actual suffering began following his descent from the subtle state of being a God-conscious person to the gross material world for the sake of humanity. It was not a result of loneliness or insanity. The 'new normality', however, remained disconcerting for Tajuddin. It was like a two-edged sword between absorption in God and being perceived as mad in the world, and being accepted as sane but having to deal with people's mundane matters. He preferred showing how to gain closeness to God.

Spot where Tajuddin often sat, near shrine of Masum Ali Shah (present-day view)

As the saint's fame increased, he found less time to pray and meditate. People flocked to him in increasing numbers for various health, financial, and other material reasons. Their desires to seek material gains disturbed him because he was more interested in helping others in their spiritual development. All this time, he was only trying to be normal, but he found it difficult to achieve this while having to deal with people's problems. One spot where he would often be found for solace was near the darbar of Hazrat Masum Ali Shah.

Sweets for a Favourable Verdict

The verdict was indeed given in his favour, which he did not expect... He bought a bowl of sweets and thanked the saint.

One day, Tajuddin was sitting with a group of his devotees near Kamptee railway station under the shade of a tree. A person of Marwari origin was passing by, deeply engrossed in thoughts and looking anxious. He wet his pants while he was heading to a nearby court where a judgement was going to be made in his case. As he was passing by, Tajuddin remarked to him, "Why are you going there in this gloomy manner? Go! The verdict will be given in your favour (*Dekhta kya ha, jaa, muqaddama to khaarij hogaye*)."

The man did not think much of what was said then, although he was surprised the group somehow knew where he was going. He continued heading for the court because he had to reach there on time. At the court, the verdict was indeed given in his favour, which he did not expect. It gave him a great sense of relief. Remembering the words of the man who gave him the good news before the verdict was actually given, he bought a bowl of sweets and thanked the saint. Tajuddin advised him to get more to give to the others present as well, saying, "*Nakoji, bachon ko bhi khelaate* (No, give them to the children, too)". So, the man quickly bought some more sweets and distributed them among all the devotees present, including the children. Then, he quickly returned to the station. The man knew about a young saint with divine powers in Nagpur but was unsure whether the one who spoke to him was the one he had heard about. After this experience, he was sure he had met that very saint in person. He was very grateful and felt fortunate to have done so.

Saved from Starvation

To his surprise, it was not empty at all... rather, it was full to the brim with food... Grateful for the saint having come to their house... the family never suffered from starvation again.

While in Kamptee, a poor family that used to visit Tajuddin often had to endure difficult circumstances. It prevented them from visiting their master for some days. They were so short on food until one day, they had nothing left to eat. That same day, the saint came to their house and demanded food from them. He said, "Give me something to eat because I'm hungry".

The head of the family did not know what to do. There was no food in the house. With great difficulty and feeling ashamed, he uttered, "Forgive us, *Huzoor*, but we don't have anything we could offer you to eat or drink".

Tajuddin smiled and said, while pointing to a food container, "Don't lie to me. Why are you hiding food in that tin over there?"

The man was adamant that they had no food and that the tin was empty. He said, "No, *Huzoor*. I am telling the truth. The tin is empty."

Tajuddin then ordered the man to open the tin, which he did. To his surprise, it was not empty at all, as he had thought; rather, it was full to the brim with food. There was enough to give to the saint, and enough for the whole family as well. Worried at having inadvertently disrespected his master, he fell down at his feet with tears of sorrow, while also expressing his gratitude. He was sure the tin was empty before his master came, and he filled it with food for them. Grateful for the saint having come to their house, all of them ate together, and the family never suffered from starvation again.

Reassurance of a Longer Life

The two felt very comforted at hearing these words. Their relief was visible on their faces. Grateful for the reassurance of an extended life, the grandmother thanked Baba Tajuddin with tears of joy in her eyes and promised to take good care of her grandchild.

A man from Kamptee, Muhammad Hanif, once mentioned his wife's experience when she fell extremely ill as a child. Her condition was very serious, and it was thought that she was going to die sometime soon. She had lost all hope of remaining alive for much longer.

Her paternal grandmother decided to take her to Baba Tajuddin. It was a last-ditch attempt to save her life, so they set off to meet Baba Tajuddin when he lived in Kamptee. When her turn came, the great healer and reviver, Baba Tajuddin, put his hand over her head with compassion and memorably said:

> *Haoji! Abhi nahi jaate. Daal khaane me khaate, thanda paani peeti, aur zinda rehte.*
>
> *Now then. You won't be leaving yet. Eat lentils for food, drink cold water, and live longer.*

The two felt very comforted at hearing these words. Their relief was visible on their faces. Grateful for the reassurance of a longer life, the grandmother thanked Baba Tajuddin with tears of joy in her eyes and promised to take good care of her grandchild. The girl was also greatly reassured as she was given renewed hope of more life to enjoy. They left satisfied that they had succeeded in having their wish fulfilled.

It so happened that the girl did not die any time soon after all. She regained her health and continued to live much longer. It was not so much the lentils or water but the reassurance she got from Baba Tajuddin that kept her alive and well. That she lived longer was evident from the fact that she got married one day, and her husband was around to tell her tale whilst she was still alive.

Tajuddin's Blessed Hands

He kissed the blessed hands that had healed his son. He was also witness to the fact that the healer was no ordinary person and definitely not a lunatic but a man of God.

An English lady lieutenant in the British Indian army, known as Master Aasti Nani, had a son who was paralysed from one side of his body. Her husband was also in the army. The couple tried far and wide to have him recovered, but it was all to no avail. It seemed that nobody could do anything to help them. They eventually gave up on doctors and turned to spiritual healers and tried several of them, too. The results of their odd treatment methods were more promising, as the boy was more at ease than before, but he was still not cured.

It was during these further attempts that someone told Master Aasti about a so-called lunatic in Kamptee with miraculous abilities who was once in the army but had left for a more austere life. She sought a man of God with the ability to heal and was optimistic that she had come across one at last. She soon found out where Tajuddin was staying and took her son along one day in the hope that he would live up to the impression she had gained about him and see her son cured of his terrible condition.

Master Aasti told Tajuddin all about her son and her several attempts to have him cured. Tajuddin listened quietly and then touched the boy's feet and said to his mother, "*Achha hojaega* (He will get well)". There was no instant recovery but a noticeable improvement, and a few days later, the boy was fully recovered. The touch by Tajuddin's blessed hands had worked, and the boy was no longer paralysed.

When the boy's father came to know about his son's cure at the hands of a former soldier turned lunatic, he came to pay his utmost respect to the saint. He kissed the blessed hands that had healed his son. He was also witness to the fact that the healer was no ordinary person and definitely not a lunatic but a man of God. The father held no qualms about why Tajuddin had left the army and was fully appreciative and supportive of his new role in helping humanity.

A Haven from the Madhouse

The world seemed like a madhouse to Tajuddin, so much so that one day he resolved to be admitted to a lunatic asylum... He considered it safer than being pursued by lunatics with their myriad of worldly problems.

Tajuddin lived on the streets of Kamptee for around a decade. He often slept on a bridge near the railroad station or in thatched houses and roamed the city during the day or night with no concern for food and water. To some, he appeared as a madman; to others who knew him, he was a *faqeer*. The latter would ask for his assistance in various matters, and he fulfilled everyone's wishes by exhibiting his miraculous powers. As the numbers grew, however, it became difficult to give that much attention to others. Besides, the world seemed like a madhouse to Tajuddin, so much so that one day, he resolved to be admitted to a lunatic asylum in Nagpur. He devised the following lines describing his feelings:

> *Log hamen bahot satate han, ab ham pagal jhopri challe jaenge.*
>
> *People bother and disturb me a lot, so now I'm off to a lunatic asylum.*

He told someone who came to seek blessings from him, "It's about time I got officially declared insane and lived in a lunatic asylum". The place was pejoratively called a lunatic asylum, but he considered it safer than being pursued by lunatics with their myriad of worldly problems. His goal was to force the British administrators to lock him away so that he could be kept away in a haven from the mad world outside. It did not make any difference to Tajuddin because many people already believed he was insane. Moreover, the asylum would provide him a place for solitude, undisturbed meditation, and the opportunity for divine communion in private. Availing this opportunity to spend more time in devotion to God away from the madhouse of the world seemed like the only sane thing to do.

Kamptee Club (present-day view)

To achieve this goal, Tajuddin entered the Kamptee Club in the Cantonment area one Friday afternoon in a state of childlike innocence as an exposed *faqeer*. The European Ladies Tennis Club members were present at the time. *Memsahibs* were chatting while drinking tea and watching tennis. What they witnessed was a shocking spectacle to them. As the *faqeer* strolled across the courts, they were terribly appalled at his sight. They shrieked and swooned. The outrage spread throughout the club. Eventually, they called for the police, who rushed to the scene. The police captured him, whom they thought was undoubtedly a madman, and bound him in ropes to be taken away. Meanwhile, Tajuddin declared delightfully: "Yay! We're off to the lunatic asylum."

On 26 August 1892, the cantonment and district magistrates incarcerated Tajuddin in a lunatic asylum at the behest of the husband of a British lady who witnessed the incident. The trial received considerable attention, and the local people protested. Some were against him, whom they perceived to be mad, and some were in his favour and could not bear the incarceration of their saviour. It was a sharp division.

The judge was so drawn to Tajuddin that, although he was dressed in poor attire, he kept seeing him dressed like a *raja* (king). The judge was distressed by the court proceedings, but the standing and influence of the lady's husband compelled him to sentence the *raja* to the asylum for the rest of his life. Tajuddin was confined at the age of 31 years and 7 months, weighing 113 lbs. He was chained under strict vigil and classified as 'military insane'. On admission, he was noted to have "a vacant wandering expression of face" and "incoherent talk" and was suspected of using cannabis.

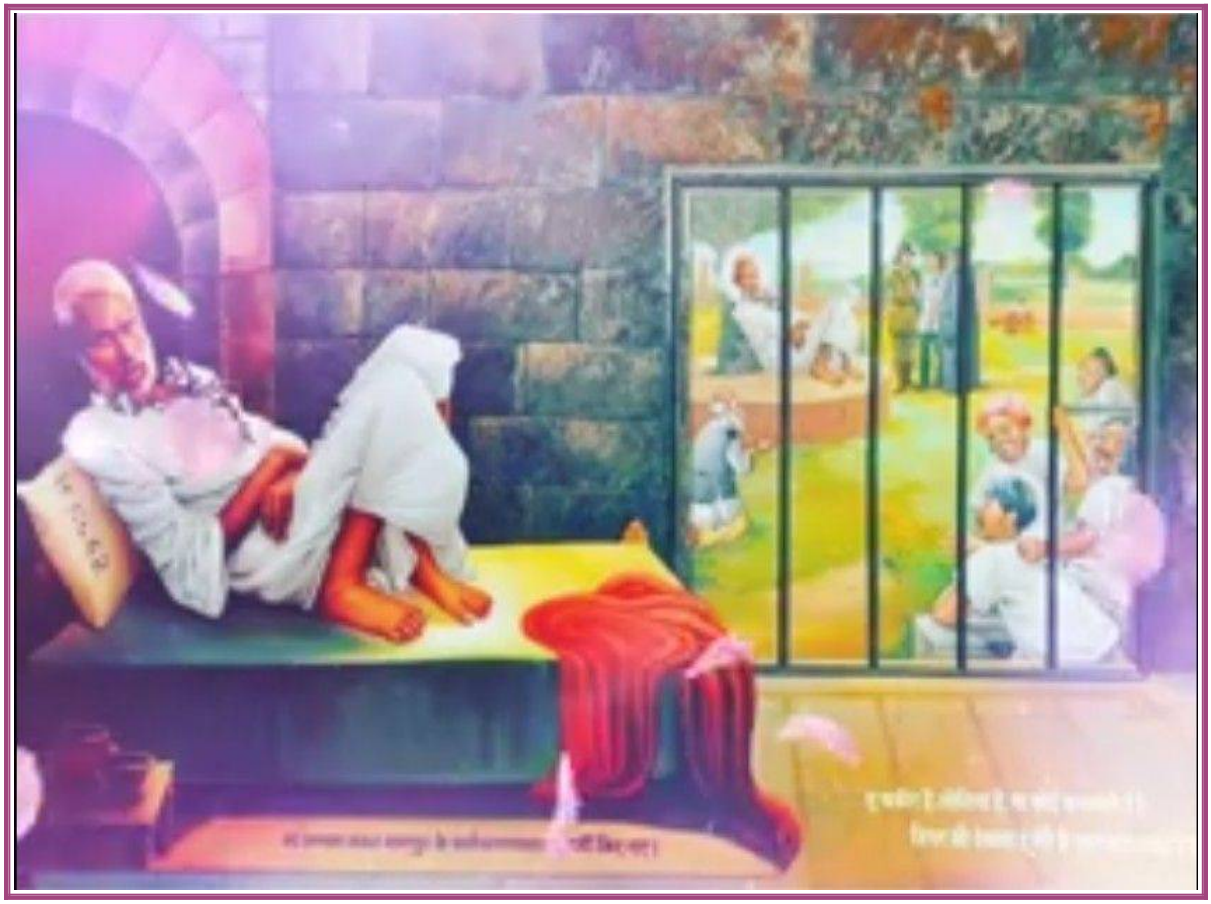
The Nagpur Lunatic Asylum had been newly established eight years earlier. It was a complex with its main gate on the main road some distance away. A small darbar has since been constructed inside, housing the original *baethak* [see Open Access to the Saint] within the grounds of what is now the Nagpur Regional Mental Hospital. During Tajuddin's time, it was more a place of custody and confinement than one for arranging treatment, so it was also described as a prison. However, for Tajuddin, it was no ordinary lunatic asylum. Rather, it was a *shifa khana* (healing centre) and a haven from the madhouse of the outside world, where even the so-called 'sane' would come to get healed or have some other need satisfied. Over time, it began to be called Darul Awliya (Abode of Saints) due to the number of enlightened people staying there.

The Nagpur Lunatic Asylum where Tajuddin stayed for approx. 16 years

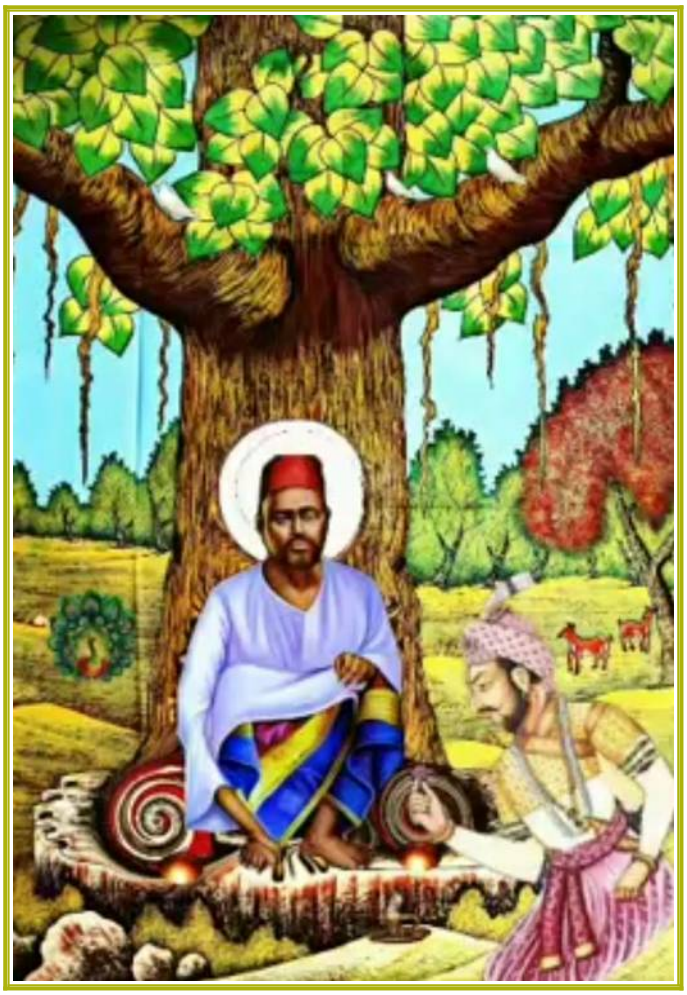
Both Inside and Outside

Thereafter, the... authorities came to terms with accepting that some things are beyond rational explanation, and knowing that the great Tajuddin resides both inside and outside their asylum.

The day after Tajuddin was incarcerated, reports were rife about a Muslim saint having possibly escaped from a secure lunatic asylum while also still present inside. An investigation was thus launched to get to the bottom of the matter. The army sepoy who brought Tajuddin to the asylum was visiting Kamptee's bazaar with his commanding officer to purchase some groceries that day. He, too, saw Tajuddin outside, sitting under a tree, smiling at him. He was shocked because he was sure that the man was locked inside the asylum. It did not seem possible to see the same man loitering freely in the streets of Kamptee.



Many others present witnessed the same, including the commanding officer with him. When the two rushed back to report the matter, the chief commanding officer, Thomas McDonald, was equally dumbfounded to hear such a report. It was known for sure that the patient was being held securely in their confinement. Nonetheless, the military commander got up immediately, mounted his horse, and rode as fast as he could to reach the spot where it was reported their patient was seen. He could not believe what he saw, seeing Tajuddin meditating under the tree, exactly as was reported.



He quickly rode back to the asylum and rushed inside, leaving his horse at the gates. He then stormed into the office of the civil surgeon, Colonel Rowe, and confronted him, demanding to know, "Where is that lunatic I brought here yesterday?" The civil surgeon was confused to hear this, but he replied confidently, "He's in his cell, of course".

The two of them went over to the cell, and indeed, they could see through the bars that the man was still securely confined. The commander noticed that Tajuddin was sitting in exactly the same posture as he had seen him sitting under the tree moments earlier. The commander was rendered speechless. He did not know what to say or do. Tajuddin then turned to him, smiled, and famously said:

Haoji Hazrat! Aap apna kaam karte, ham apna kaam karte

Brother, you're doing your work, and I'm doing mine.

The chief commanding officer was so impressed by his divine personality that he bowed his head and became one of his devotees, there and then. His family was among the frequent visitors from that day on. Thereafter, the asylum authorities came to terms with accepting that some things are beyond rational explanation and knowing that the great Tajuddin resides both inside and outside their asylum. By now, it became common knowledge in Nagpur and beyond that a noble saint was living among them, capable of being present simultaneously in multiple places. There was also a sense of remorse for having incarcerated such a noble being who had done no wrong.

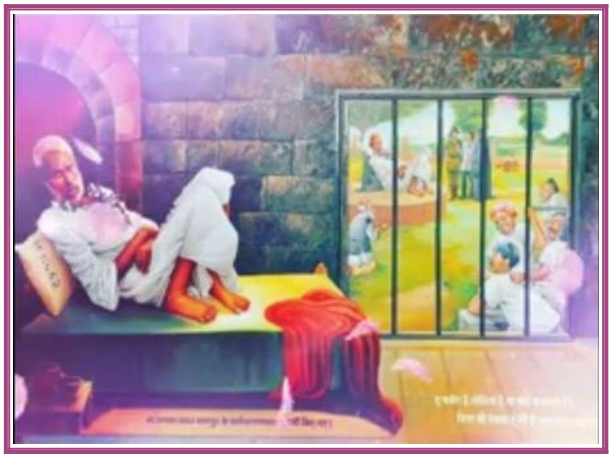
The commanding officer felt sorry for his role in confining Tajuddin. He also knew that Tajuddin was aware of his predicament. From that day on, he specially visited Tajuddin every Sunday with his family. The British ladies who were instrumental in Tajuddin's incarceration were also dumbfounded at his miraculous ability, but they were helpless to remedy the situation. They, too, witnessed Tajuddin walking outside in Kamptee and were among those who first reported the matter to the police about why the *faqeer* had been set free. For sixteen years, Tajuddin was confined at the asylum, though free to bilocate. He continued to help people, albeit in a more controlled way, as he preferred. For Tajuddin himself, it was not a mental institute but an institute for the pious.

Dr Kashinath Rao

In due time, all those in charge of running the asylum during Tajuddin's stay, from the senior management to the lowly workers, became his devotees. In fact, they all felt privileged to have the opportunity to witness many *karamaat* of their favourite prisoner and patient, especially the numerous cases in which he healed others. Among his notable devotees were the chief

doctor on duty, Dr. Abdul Majeed Khan, Dr. Kashinath Rao, and Dr. Pownaskar.

Air circulation



When Dr. Abdul Majeed saw Tajuddin walking on the asylum porch one night, he yelled at the security guard, "Why didn't you lock the cell?" The guard took the doctor over to the patient's cell to show him that the door was properly locked and that Tajuddin was inside. This observation was shocking for the doctor. He couldn't believe what he saw. It confirmed the commanding officer's report. He glimpsed at the patient intently once more. Meanwhile, Tajuddin said to him from inside the cell:

> *Kia dekhta ha? Hawa to aati ha aur jaati bhi ha.*
>
> *Why do you look so dumbfounded? Surely, you know that air circulates both inward and outward.*

The doctor marvelled at what he saw. He esteemed Tajuddin from the core of his heart and started visiting him to pay his respects regularly from then on. One morning on another day, when the security guard opened the main door, he was stunned again to see him waiting to come inside. He informed the doctors and management immediately. They rushed over and took Tajuddin to his cell. When they reached the door of the cell, they saw that it was firmly locked from the outside. It was evident that he was no ordinary person, so they did not say a single word. Their faith in and respect for him only grew further.

In Service of Humanity

He helped everyone who came to him, irrespectively, including all those on whom society had turned its back. He forgave with magnanimity and never considered anyone so bad...

Tajuddin's work over a period of 16 years while in the asylum was to cure thousands of people of diseases, grant children to childless couples, take spiritual care of his numerous devotees, and so on, both inside and outside. Some doctors also became his devotees, and in one doctor's report, it was made clear that Tajuddin was not mad but a person of unusual qualities that could not be explained by medical science.

Once, the lunatic asylum guard found Tajuddin waiting to enter when he opened the main gate. Surprised to see him standing there, the guard immediately took Tajuddin inside and informed the superintendent of the matter. They found that the door to his room was locked. However, they did not say anything to him because they were already aware of his unusual abilities. These incidents only consolidated his fame and respect. Leaving the asylum grounds was strictly forbidden, but when Tajuddin needed to leave for an important humanitarian task, the locks on all gates would simply drop off. Often, no one was able to tell if and when he left and returned.

Tajuddin displayed numerous *karamaat*, both inside and outside the asylum. For instance, he was never burdened by the loads he was made to carry [see Easing of Hard Labour], he made an escapee return [see Two Slaps for an Escapee], he saved the life of a doctor from being run over by a train [see The Leaf that Saved a Life], and he cured a woman possessed by a jinn [see The Bold and Insolent Jinn]. The fragrance of the saint's spiritual grace had spread so far and wide that people thronged to the asylum for a *darshan* (glimpse); to see him, and to seek his blessing. He helped everyone who came to him, irrespectively, including all those on whom society had turned its back. He forgave with magnanimity and never considered anyone so bad that they were lost altogether.

Easing of Hard Labour

Tajuddin was made to carry a ghamela full of soil on his head... The officials were amazed to see it float a few inches above his head and follow him wherever he went... he refused preferential treatment...

Although the lunatic asylum, as it was then popularly called, was a place for looking after the insane, it was run more like a prison camp. The patients were not routinely given any medical treatment, and their condition was pitiable. Some were locked up for life, and the keys were thrown away. Prior to Tajuddin's presence bringing about a transformation, all patients were treated as abnormal inmates, which was cruel. They were forced to perform manual labour, such as carrying heavy loads, shifting dirt, and breaking stones.

Once, as part of the duties the patients were given, Tajuddin was made to carry a *ghamela* (an iron pail) full of soil on his head. The officials were amazed to see it float a few inches above his head and follow him wherever he went. When more such incidents occurred, those in charge of the asylum got an inkling of his true stature. They tried to prevent him from doing such demeaning work, but he refused preferential treatment inside the asylum and insisted on labouring like all other inmates. Soon after he was locked up, many people also reported seeing him wandering freely in the streets. This led to his fame spreading further among the public at large.

Over time, the hard-labour tasks became less common. The officials of the institution no longer saw it as befitting to treat inmates with mental problems the way they had in the past. Some rules were relaxed when Tajuddin's spiritual status became conspicuous, not only for Tajuddin but for other inmates as well, especially those who were among the saint's devotees. As they did not behave like mad people typically did all the time, they were no longer always treated as such either. The entire ambience of the asylum had become noticeably more favourable and flexible for the patients by virtue of Tajuddin's blessed presence.

Open Access to the Saint

A separate entranceway was created... so that outsiders could easily reach the very tree where Tajuddin normally sat... the entry fee was abolished... [and] there was free and open access to the saint.

Despite the easing of hard labour and the relaxation of some rules for mental patients, it was not long before a new kind of madness spread throughout the asylum. It was one in which the people had become mad in their longing for God and for the wonderful company of the man of God who dwelt among them. This madness attracted all kinds of people to make their way to the asylum, irrespective of whether they were considered sane or insane. Although most of them comprised the sick, weak, and poor, notable dignitaries visited him as well.

As the number of visitors increased, however, special arrangements had to be made to control and accommodate them all. Eventually, a separate entranceway was created in the asylum so that outsiders could easily reach the very tree where Tajuddin normally sat. However, the administrators introduced an entry fee of two *aanaas*, and a fixed number of tickets were issued at intervals to avoid overcrowding. They decided to capitalise on the increasing number of visitors coming to meet the *majzoob* saint. Initially, the amount was nominal, but over time, the fee was hiked to one rupee. These visits became very profitable for them.

This situation troubled Tajuddin because poor people were no longer able to meet him openly. It was one of the reasons why he began spending more time outside the asylum, much to the bewilderment of the asylum authorities. The arrangement could not last long anyway due to the sheer number of visitors. With the help of Thomas, the military commander of Kamptee, the entry fee was abolished altogether [see A Muslim Saint on the Cross]. This change allowed everyone to visit Tajuddin inside the asylum freely, including the poor. Eventually, however, it became necessary to involve the guards and occasionally also the police to control the large crowds, but no longer to restrict people from entering. From then on, there was free and open access to the saint.

Baba Tajuddin's baethak at the Nagpur Mental Asylum

The present darbar at the former asylum

Two Slaps for an Escapee

> "Brother Tajuddin slapped me hard, twice, and told me to come back to the asylum, so I came back with him. Then he left me at the gate and disappeared."

There were around 130 other inmates at the lunatic asylum with Tajuddin when he was first admitted. The reason it was often described as a prison was because, in 1892, it underwent a radical transformation that included erecting higher walls and stronger railing. These security measures were brought about by its superintendent, Major Dr. McKay, to stop patients from escaping. In spite of these measures, however, a prisoner who was sent outside for prison work one day failed to return.

The prisoner escaped from the eyes of the guards, slipped away, and went back to his own home. It was only in the evening, when the prisoners were being counted that the authorities realised one of them was missing. Dr. Abdul Majeed, who was responsible for their well-being, was very worried and upset over this matter. He reprimanded his employees for being careless. While the doctor was dealing with his employees to take action, Tajuddin arrived on the scene and, before going inside, told them, "Don't worry about what has happened. The escapee will come back by tomorrow morning himself (*kyun ghabrata ha, subah ajaega*)."

The next morning, the prisoner indeed returned to the asylum of his own accord. As soon as he was seen entering the gate, the employees ushered him inside and immediately informed Dr. Abdul Majeed. The doctor went over to the patient and asked him where he had been. The patient told them he had gone back to his village, but in the morning, "Brother Tajuddin slapped me hard twice and told me to come back to the asylum, so I came back with him. Then he left me at the gate and disappeared." After this incident, Dr. Abdul Majeed's faith in and respect for Tajuddin deepened so much that he would often invite him to his home and consult him on various matters. He was now a firm disciple (*mureed*) of one of his patients.

The Bizarre Greeting

He saw a bizarre hand protrude from a wall, edging towards Tajuddin... [who] shook the hand, which then suddenly retracted and disappeared... his patient also vanished in a flash.

A new superintendent doctor at the lunatic asylum, Kashinath Rao, was in his room one day when Tajuddin suddenly entered. A state of glory was visible on his face. Seeing him look so majestic made him a little startled and concerned. He then remembered he had locked the patient in his room, so he wondered how he got there. While thinking this, he heard a voice say, "*Assalamu 'alaykum*" (peace on you), to which Tajuddin replied, "*Wa 'alaykum assalam*" (you too).

The doctor could not see anyone else in the room. The voice came as if from nowhere. Then he saw a bizarre hand protrude from a wall, edging towards Tajuddin with all five fingers outstretched. Tajuddin shook the hand, which then suddenly retracted and disappeared. This made the doctor frightened. He was terrified even more when his patient also vanished in a flash. A part of the wall's plaster that fell when the hand emerged was physical evidence that he was not hallucinating.

The doctor came out of the room and rushed over to where he was certain that his patient was still locked up. When he opened the locked door, he saw Tajuddin meditating there. This made him wonder whether he was hallucinating after all, but since he had already heard of his miraculous powers, he thought perhaps he had witnessed a *karaamat*. Strangely, that same day, eleven other mental patients ran away from the asylum but returned the following day before a visit by a senior English officer was due to take place.

The Urgent Enquiry

So, it turned out that the patient's words were true... He was much impressed by Tajuddin's ability to handle challenging situations spiritually and give information that he could not possibly have known by ordinary means.

A colonel surgeon once enquired about Tajuddin when he was a patient at the lunatic asylum. Dr Pownaskar was in charge at the time. The colonel had heard about Tajuddin using his spiritual powers to bring an escapee back into the asylum [see Two Slaps for an Escapee] and the recent escapees who had also returned [see The Bizarre Greeting]. He was not only surprised at how they managed to escape but also how they were brought or came back. Rather, he was suspicious about the whole affair and wanted to know more about what actually happened. He considered it to be an urgent matter and launched an enquiry.

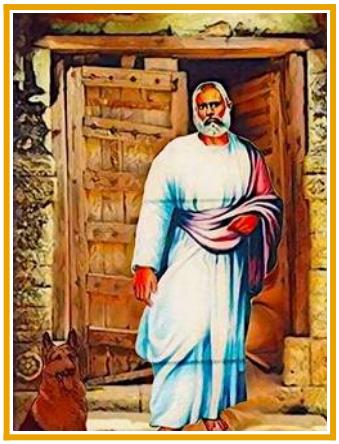
The surgeon and the doctor were discussing this incident when Tajuddin suddenly entered the room. He informed the colonel as if it was something urgent, "What are you doing here? Your wife has died, yet you're standing here enquiring about me."

The officer was doubtful about the veracity of what the patient had just said. Still, he quickly ran over to his bungalow to check. There was an urgent, unopened telegram on his desk from England informing him that his wife had just died. So, it turned out that the patient's words were true. His enquiry about Tajuddin had now led him to make the right and more urgent enquiry about his own wife. He immediately left the asylum and went home to find out what had happened and deal with the family matter. Although saddened about his wife's death, he was much impressed by Tajuddin's ability to handle challenging situations spiritually and give information that he could not possibly have known by ordinary means. He became an instant admirer.

The Mendicant Healer

He was extremely happy. He was sure it was Tajuddin who had healed her... She was fully recovered without any signs of illness at all, looking well and healthy.

Among the *karamaat* Tajuddin displayed were those in which he healed people instantly. Being confined inside an asylum did not hinder him from helping others, no matter where they were. On one occasion, a man came and pleaded with him to save his daughter, who was extremely ill and on the verge of death. He had exhausted all other forms of medical treatment available in those days. After hearing what the man had to say, Tajuddin merely closed his eyes for a few moments and said, "Your daughter is fine. You may go." The man went back and was amazed to find his daughter sitting up in good health and having dinner. He was extremely happy. He was sure it was Tajuddin who had healed her.



The man asked his wife how his daughter had recovered. She told him a mendicant came to the door asking for alms, so she gave him some food. Seeing the grief visible on their faces, he asked what was troubling them. When she told him about her daughter's condition, he asked to see her and pray for her. She continued, "We, therefore, allowed him inside the house and took him to her room. While standing near her, the mendicant told us not to worry, saying that 'she'll be fine', then he left."

As soon as the man departed from their house, her daughter's condition improved instantly, as if nothing had happened. She was fully recovered, without any signs of illness at all, looking well and healthy. She continued telling her husband that all their daughter asked for was food, so she prepared dinner for her, and that is when he arrived. The man then told her his side of the story, saying that he went to visit a saint named Tajuddin but wondered who the mendicant was. Some days later, when the whole family went to see Tajuddin, the wife confirmed he was the mendicant who had come to their house that day when their daughter recovered.

The Leaf that Saved a Life

The doctor told them with tears of gratitude in his eyes that he had come from Nagpur... and that it was Tajuddin who saved his life by giving him a leaf from a tree. He showed them the leaf.

The asylum doctor named Abdul Majeed Khan wanted to go to Bombay to attend a function, so he went to meet Tajuddin to seek his permission and blessings in the matter. Unexpectedly, Tajuddin remained silent, but after the third request on his knees, he told him not to go. He said, "Do not go, for there is danger on the way, but if you insist, then take this...".

When Abdul Majeed insisted on going, Tajuddin gave him a leaf taken from the tree under which he was sitting after muttering something over it. He instructed the doctor to take the leaf with him, keep it in his pocket at all times, and return soon. Abdul Majeed took the leaf, thanked Tajuddin, and left to prepare for the journey.

While the doctor was on his way to Bombay, an accident occurred at the Bhusawal railway station yard, where trains halted for long periods. The doctor came out of the train momentarily to get something and was crossing the railway line when another locomotive, which was out of control, suddenly came rushing toward him from the opposite direction. Incredibly, the engine stopped right in front of where the man was standing. His life was extremely close to being in grave danger, but he was safe.

The train did not touch him at all, but he fell down and fainted on the railway track out of panic. People thought he must have been run over. They lifted him off the track to a safe place on the platform and noticed he was not hurt at all. They were amazed at how his life had been saved

from such serious danger when he regained consciousness. By now, the engine driver and a fireman were also on the scene, and more people gathered around him to see the lucky man. The driver made it clear that the brakes had failed, and he was unable to stop the train, so he was baffled as to how the train managed to stop. He said, "I did not apply the brakes. The engine somehow halted by itself."

Knowing the circumstances in which the accident happened and how the man was lucky to be alive, some people at the scene asked whether he was a saint and whether he was the one who stopped the engine like that. They were sure he must be a noble soul. The doctor told them with tears of gratitude in his eyes that he had come from Nagpur after visiting a saint there named Tajuddin. He added that he was initially prohibited from going to Bombay and that it was Tajuddin who saved his life by giving him a leaf from a tree. He showed them the leaf and clarified that he was merely a humble devotee of the real great saint and noble soul, Tajuddin of Nagpur. The railway officials were convinced that it was the saint's intervention that saved the man's life, as there was no other plausible explanation. This incident prompted many more people who witnessed the *karaamat* to visit the lunatic asylum in Nagpur to meet the saint there.

ASSISTANT SURGEON

Some days later, when the assistant surgeon post became vacant at the lunatic asylum one day, Tajuddin appointed Dr. Abdul Majeed to the post. He made this clear by telling him to sit on the seat next to that of the civil surgeon during the meeting of its administration. Without any hesitation, the surgeon general announced Abdul Majeed's appointment as the new assistant surgeon. Besides this personal experience, he also witnessed numerous other *karamaat* at the asylum when people came to the lunatic asylum and had their wishes fulfilled.

The Bold and Insolent Jinn

The jinn was no longer able to maintain possession of the lady's body and promptly vacated... When she came to her senses, her countenance changed completely... The jinn was gone...

During Tajuddin's stay at the lunatic asylum, a lady was brought to him one day in an emergency. Her family reported that she was possessed by a jinn and was suffering in great agony. They had tried many medications and remedies, both mundane and spiritual, but to no avail. The jinn was troubling her more and more each day, and the situation had gotten out of control. They were desperate to find someone to rid her of this possession, and it was then that they were advised by someone to take her to the Muslim saint in Nagpur's lunatic asylum.

When the lady was brought into Tajuddin's presence, and the family pleaded for his assistance, the saint read something and spat in her face. Looking at her, he then addressed the jinn directly: "Why do you dare to be so bold and insolent with us *faqeers*?"

The very moment he uttered these words, the jinn was no longer able to maintain possession of the lady's body, so it promptly vacated. At the same time, this was evident by the woman's swooning and falling unconscious. When she came to her senses, her countenance changed completely. The family could see and was relieved at seeing, a glow of happiness and relief on her face. The jinn was gone, and it never bothered her ever again.

A Nobleman from Bombay

He got a telegraphic reply informing him that his father suddenly recovered... Hearing the good news lifted his spirits. He returned to the saint and fell at his feet in solemn gratitude.

One day, a Memon nobleman came from Bombay to seek the saint's blessings for his critically ill father. All the doctors in Bombay were unable to do anything to save his life. He came to Nagpur in a final attempt after hearing about the saint's miraculous healing powers. When he met Tajuddin, before he was able to say anything to explain the purpose of his visit, he was told to "go back". This startled the nobleman because he did not get the chance to express his concern, and he was being told to return without, as he thought, anything being done to help his father. Meanwhile, Dr. Abdul Majeed had seen enough to know Tajuddin meant exactly what he said because the job was done. While the nobleman was thinking that perhaps the saint was trying to dismiss him inconsiderately, Tajuddin added, "Because your father is perfectly well".

Still not believing how his father could be healed over 400 miles away with a few mere words, the nobleman immediately wired home to enquire about the condition of his father. He got a telegraphic reply informing him that his father had suddenly and fully recovered a short while ago. Hearing the good news lifted his spirits. He returned to the saint and fell at his feet in solemn gratitude. He then arranged for a large amount of alms to be distributed to the poor before departing to return to Bombay. When the Memon returned home, he saw that his father was indeed perfectly well, in fact, even better than he was before feeling unwell.

The Commissioner's Dog

The dog got up immediately, barked, and ran outside. All those present with Tajuddin, who witnessed what just happened, stood there flabbergasted. It was not at all what they were expecting.

The chief surgeon of Nagpur's lunatic asylum and Sir Thomas McDonald were once present together when they heard about the death of a Commissioner's dog. The three were together and were arranging for the dog to be buried when the chief surgeon suggested having their patient Tajuddin pray for the dog after having buried it.

They met Tajuddin at the asylum, but strangely, he asked them to bring the dog. The commissioner was surprised that he would make such a request, especially as it had already been buried, and they knew that Tajuddin knew that. Besides, they only asked for him to pray in the dog's absence. Nonetheless, they complied with Tajuddin's request to see what he would do and brought the dog's body over to the lunatic asylum. The dog lay dead, but Tajuddin spoke to it, "Get up! Why are you lying there?"

The dog got up immediately, barked, and ran outside. All those present with Tajuddin, who witnessed what just happened, stood there flabbergasted. It was not at all what they were expecting. Prayer was all they had requested Tajuddin to do, but he did more than that by reviving the dog instead, not that they weren't grateful for what he did. Not only that, but the dog had to be removed from its fresh grave. Regardless, the surgeon, commander, and especially the commissioner were ever grateful to Tajuddin for bringing the dog back to life.

A Muslim Saint on the Cross

"Bless me Tajudidin." Tears flowed from his eyes as he was saying these words, pleading for Tajuddin's blessings... the very next day, Thomas received news of his promotion.

The military commander of Kamptee, Sir Thomas McDonald, was already among Tajuddin's devotees. As a Christian, he was fascinated by Tajuddin's spiritual powers. On Christmas Day, 25 December 1892, after attending the holy mass at the Nagpur Church, he went over to a statue of Jesus Christ (uwbp) on the cross to supplicate with closed eyes. When he opened his eyes, to his astonishment, he saw Tajuddin on the cross instead of Jesus Christ (uwbp). He rubbed his eyes and looked again, and then thrice, to ensure it was indeed Tajuddin he was seeing, and it was just as he had seen it the first time.

Thomas rushed out of the church and ran over to the lunatic asylum along with his family. Immediately upon reaching Tajuddin, he fell at his feet and said, "O Tajuddin, you are my Lord and Saviour! Please bless me! Bless me, Tajuddin." Tears flowed from his eyes as he was saying these words, pleading for Tajuddin's blessings. Tajuddin picked him up, looked at him lovingly with a smile, and asked him, "Why don't you mount the horse and then come back?"

Thomas did not understand what horse Tajuddin was referring to. There was no horse around at the time, but he understood that he had to come back another time. He promptly departed, with hope in his heart that Tajuddin would keep him blessed. It so happened that the very next day, Thomas received news of his promotion. It was then that he understood what Tajuddin meant by telling him to 'mount the horse'.

Thereafter, Thomas remained a staunch devotee of the magnanimous saint Tajuddin. Another important change that came about as a result of Thomas entering the asylum was after the guards failed to recognise him and made him pay the entry fee. Thomas ordered an end to this arrangement by abolishing it altogether. It allowed more people to freely visit the saint without paying to do so [see Open Access to the Saint].

Majestic and Cobra-Adorned

Tajuddin was seated on the floor majestically, with the hood of a big black cobra spread over him and its body twirled around his neck... Tajuddin looked very calm and at ease.

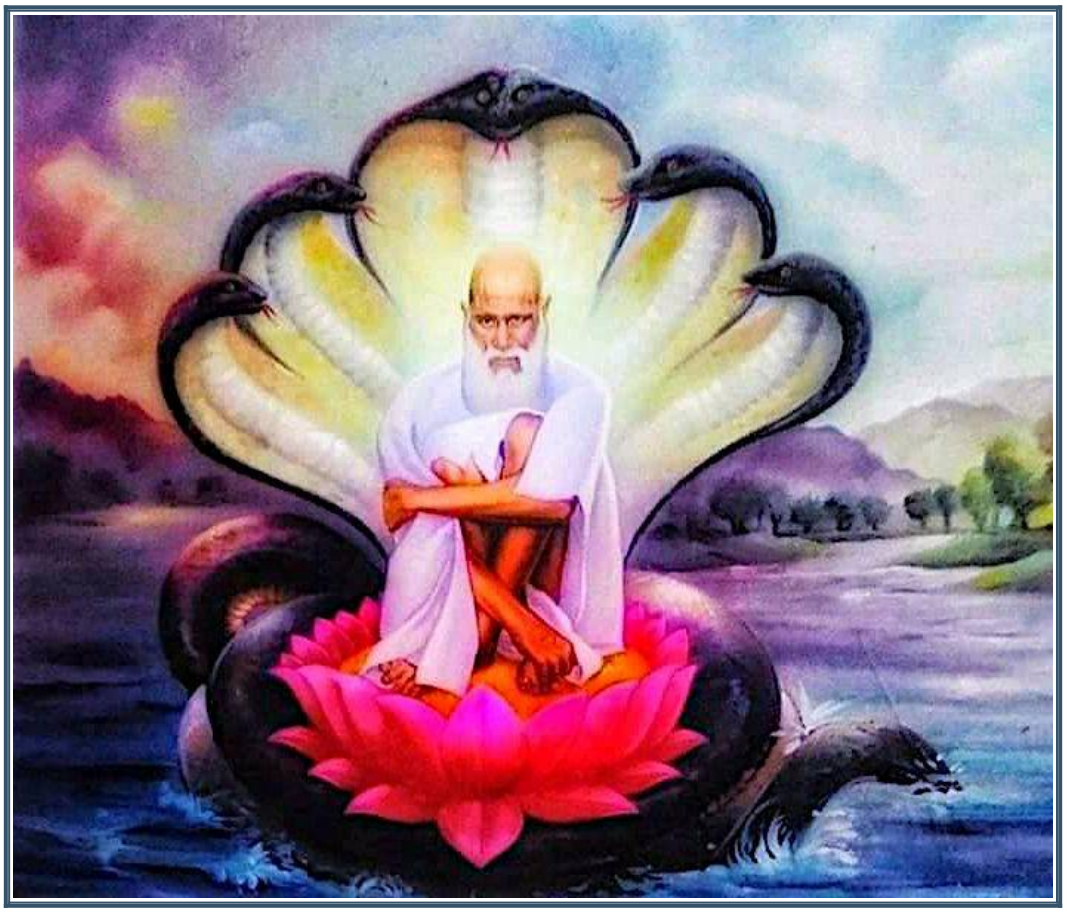
A staunch devotee of Tajuddin named Narayan Rao Kalamkar visited the lunatic asylum regularly to seek blessings. He was a devout Hindu who followed his religious duties stringently. He fasted every Monday during the month of Shravan and prayed at the temple of Shankarji after purifying himself.

One Monday, Narayan decided to visit the saint to pay his respects before going to the temple. He left his house in the late afternoon to reach the asylum. Upon arrival, he proceeded straight to his master's cell, which was locked. He was horrified at what he saw inside through the bars. He rushed over to bring Dr. Abdul Hameed who was also stunned when he saw the state Tajuddin was in. Tajuddin was seated on the floor majestically, with the hood of a big black cobra spread over him and its body twirled around his neck.

Narayan and the doctor did not know how to protect the patient from what they perceived as a danger. Strangely, Tajuddin looked very calm and at ease. His body was still, but when he saw the two in a state of panic and uncertainty, he smiled to reassure them that all was well.

Rather, he beckoned them to come in, so they opened the cell. Tajuddin asked, “Why are you afraid? Come in.”

Saying so, he removed the snake from around his neck, and it promptly vanished. Seeing that the cobra was no longer there and feeling safer, the two went inside. Tajuddin asked Narayan, “How many more visits to the temple do you have remaining?” At these words, Narayan immediately fell at the saint’s feet and cried, “O Tajuddin! You are my Shankar. You are my Mahadev.”



A Remedy for a Doctor's Son

They returned home to try Tajuddin's remedy. To his surprise, his son regained normality within a matter of days. He was no longer mentally disturbed, and his depression was completely gone.

A retired doctor, Riazuddin, who was once a senior at the Nagpur Lunatic Asylum where Tajuddin was staying, had a son who suffered from depression and became mentally disturbed. Riazuddin took utmost care of him at home, especially as he was an expert in the field of mental health. Despite this, however, a time came when his son's condition deteriorated to the extent that the doctor deemed it necessary to admit him to the lunatic asylum. So, he appeared one day at his former workplace along with his son and was very worried for him.

Tajuddin was fiddling with a stone when Riazuddin and his son were passing by inside the asylum grounds. He advised Riazuddin to join in with him and dig the earth at the very spot he was in. Riazuddin was aware of Tajuddin's miraculous abilities but had never had the opportunity to meet the renowned patient before or any personal experience. Still, he respected and trusted him. So, he did as he was told, and they unearthed a small eyeball-sized grain. Tajuddin said to the father, "*Haoji! Is ko pees ke khaate, achha hojaate* (Just grind this piece of grain, and he will get well)".

The doctor did exactly as he was instructed and avoided going further to admit his son as a patient. He thought he might as well give it a chance, given Tajuddin's reputation for healing miraculously. They returned home to try Tajuddin's remedy. To his surprise, his son regained normality within a matter of days. He was no longer mentally disturbed, and his depression was completely gone. The boy was once more like before there was any sign of such conditions, like a fully normal and healthy child. The father and son then paid another visit to the asylum and expressed their utmost gratitude to Tajuddin for what he did for them.

The Mysterious Barrister

It was only when he remembered and met Tajuddin at the lunatic asylum, and Tajuddin spoke to him in the same eloquent fashion, that he came to know who the mysterious barrister may have been.

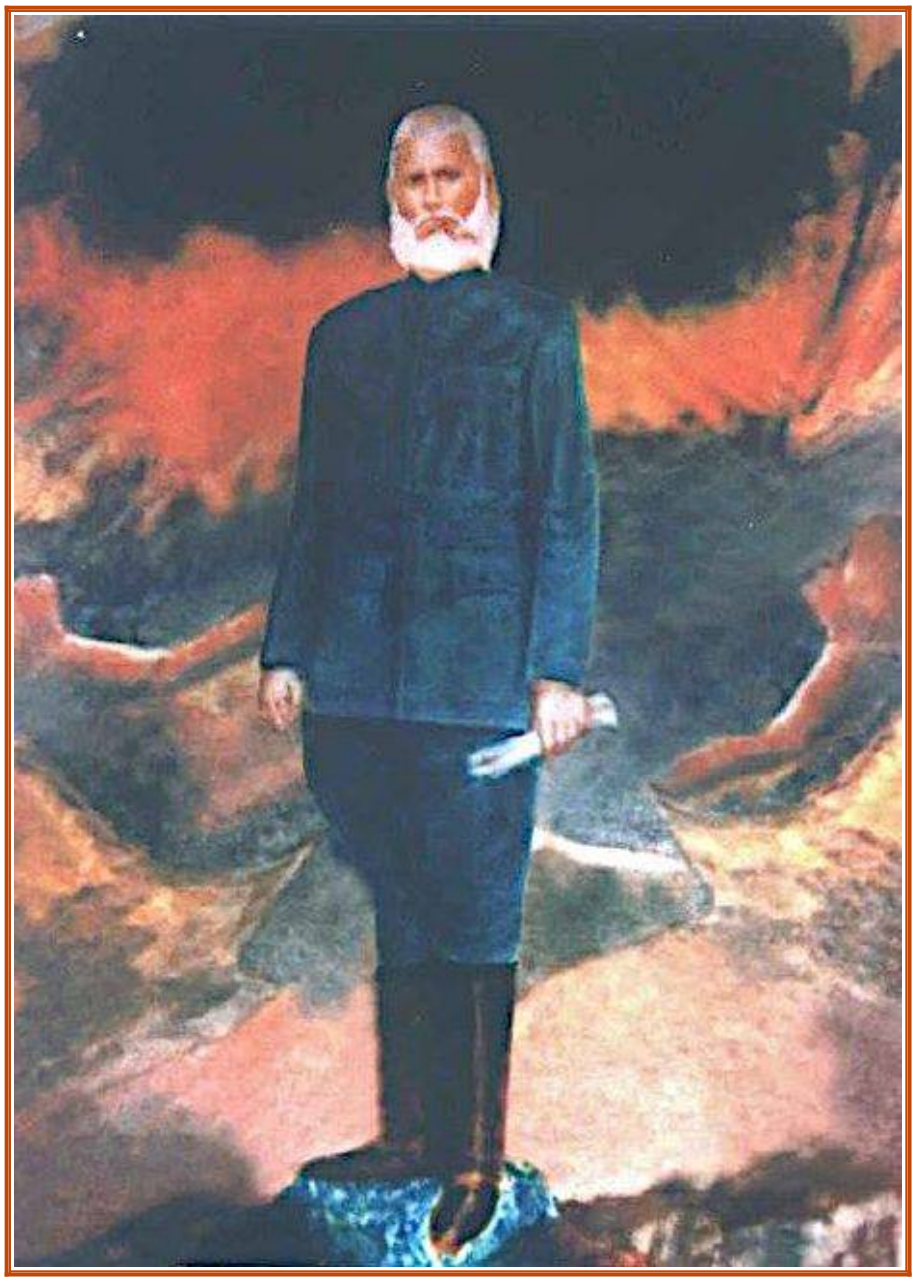
A small-scale farmer by the name of Ram Singh was falsely implicated in a murder case. All his pleas for innocence fell on deaf ears. He was taken away by the police to face a trial at the Sessions Court. Due to a lack of funds, he had no proper legal representation. The court upheld the charge, and Ram Singh was likely to be sentenced to death. However, the case was referred to the High Court for further confirmation so that the charge could be proved beyond doubt.

Old Nagpur High Court

A guard at the jail told Ram about Tajuddin. He advised the prisoner to seek his blessings so not all hope was lost. Ram's application for release on parole was accepted conditionally. He went straight over to meet Tajuddin and cried while pleading his innocence, saying, "O Tajuddin! I am innocent, but they are going to hang me. Please save me." The saint looked at him consolingly and said, "Go, lad, go! We don't punish the innocent. You are released."

Ram Singh returned to the cell with some solace in his heart, but he was still concerned about who would plead for him in court. This disturbing thought prevailed, and then the time came for his case to be heard. By then, he had forgotten about his request to Tajuddin because nothing was done to help him on the spot, and he was too anxious. Apprehensively and with a heavy heart, he presented himself in court. Suddenly, a tall, lean barrister wearing a flowing robe appeared. The mysterious barrister informed the court in a booming voice that he would be pleading on behalf of Ram Singh. The judge granted permission. Ram was clueless as to who the mysterious barrister was.

The barrister spoke highly eloquently. His arguments were indisputable.
The judgement was a foregone conclusion.
Ram Singh was acquitted. He went after the mysterious barrister to find out who he was but was told to mind his own business. The barrister added, “Do you eat mangoes or count the number of jujubes?”



Seeing him disappointed, the barrister advised him to see the person again from whom he had requested help recently. It was only when he remembered and met Tajuddin at the lunatic asylum, and Tajuddin spoke to him in the same eloquent fashion, that he came to know who the mysterious barrister may have been. Thereafter, he remained ever grateful to Tajuddin for saving his life. However, given that Ram Singh failed to recognise Tajuddin at the court and afterward, when he spoke to enquire who he was, it remains a mystery as to whether the barrister was Tajuddin himself or someone else he had delegated to get the mission accomplished.

Making it Rain

He slowly poured some water... Gradually, these vapours rose higher and higher until they formed clouds in the sky... Shortly thereafter, it rained so heavily that it ended the drought in Nagpur.

Once, Nagpur was in the grip of a severe drought after the failure of the summer monsoon in 1899. It happened during the wider Indian famine that lasted from 1896 to 1902. Due to the shortage of water, crops were badly damaged, and due to a shortage of fodder, animals were dying in large numbers. When the situation became unbearable, people flocked to Tajuddin to complain about their difficulties and hardships. They said the grains were being sold at exorbitant prices due to the drought, and people were in great affliction.

Upon hearing the suffering of the inhabitants, Tajuddin smiled and went straight into the woods. Many of the people present accompanied him there. Along the way, people from different villages made the same complaint: that their crops were being damaged, and their animals were dying. Many of them also joined in following the saint into the woods.

When Tajuddin reached the woods, his condition suddenly changed. The people noticed that he had become spiritually empowered. In a majestic state, he demanded to be brought some water, so one farmer presented him with water in a jug. Tajuddin then asked for some wood to light a fire, so the people arranged for the wood. When a fire was lit, he slowly poured some water onto the firewood. Instead of dripping downward onto the firewood, the drops of water turned into water vapour instantly and rose upwards. Gradually, these vapours rose higher and higher until they formed clouds in the sky. All those present witnessed the clouds forming for as long as the water was being poured from the jug. By the time the water in the jug had fully evaporated, the sky was full of these clouds. Shortly thereafter, it rained so heavily that it ended the drought in Nagpur.

The Flower Amulet

He also gave him a flower as a taweez beside the glad tidings of her recovery. His daughter was indeed fine when he returned home to see her. Within a few days, she was fully recovered.

The author of the first hagiography on the life of Tajuddin recounted his own personal experience with the saint as well. His name was Qutbuddin, and he worked as a secretary. His spiritual guide once advised him to frequently visit Tajuddin at the asylum. From then on, he visited whenever he could and was privileged to be given the opportunity to massage the saint's feet. While doing so, one day, Tajuddin suddenly said, "He has come. Go. (*Woh aya ha. Jao*)".

Qutbuddin was unsure who had come, but when he went to check, it was his brother Abdul Hadi. Abdul Hadi joined his brother in massaging the saint's feet. Then, he pleaded with Tajuddin to do something about his daughter, who was very unwell. Tajuddin told him, "Go. You will see that your daughter is fine (*Jao. Beti achhi hogi*)". He also gave him a flower as a *taweez* beside the glad tidings of her recovery. His daughter was indeed fine when he returned home to see her. Within a few days, she was fully recovered. It was a remarkable incident because there was little hope of quick recovery, if at all. His daughter described it as a sudden, energising moment that restored her health initially, which then gradually improved towards full recovery.

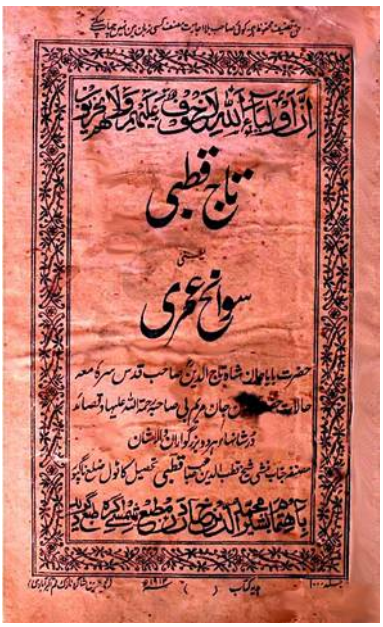
It was customary for Tajuddin to give a flower as a *taweez*. He would otherwise give a petal, leaf, twig, or a black stone instead, normally whatever was available at hand. He would also tell such visitors to read *Surah Fatihah* [see The Necessary Fatihah] or *Surah Yasin* and to have *sabr* (patience). The object served merely as a token and the master's words as reassurance, as it was the power of the healer or Quranic verse behind them that effectuated the transformation.

Astounded and Inspired

He was astounded by the saint's intimate knowledge of the situation before mentioning it... He was inspired to record the numerous karamaat of his spiritual master.

Qutbuddin often visited Tajuddin at the lunatic asylum, as advised by his own spiritual guide, but one day, circumstances compelled him to pay another visit, this time urgently. He came to beg the saint to pray for his son, Fakhruddin, who had been very ill for the past four months. He knew about the saint's miraculous powers of healing but resorted to seeking his help only when his son's condition had become very serious and no other treatment was proving effective. His experience still amazed him, though.

Qutbuddin was permitted to enter the asylum to meet Tajuddin at twelve o'clock, but unfortunately, it was too late. Rather, it was meant to be that way. When he reached the saint, he was told before he had the chance to speak, "He has already left this world, so why try to prevent it now?" On one hand, he was saddened to hear about his son's demise. On the other hand, he was astounded by the saint's intimate knowledge of the situation before mentioning it and the fact that he used the exact same words that were in his mind the night before. Tajuddin consoled him by telling him to have *sabr*.


تاج قطبی
یعنی
سوانح عمری

When Qutbuddin left the asylum on his way home, a relative informed him that his son had passed away an hour earlier. He quickly reached home and arranged for the funeral rites. Sometime after recovering from the loss, he became Tajuddin's close devotee. As a secretary by profession, he was inspired to record the numerous *karamaat* of his spiritual master. He then compiled the notes into a book titled '*Taj Qutbi*'. It contained mostly those happenings that occurred during Tajuddin's confinement at the lunatic asylum, making it a historically valuable and authentic hagiography of the Crown of Saints of his early life.

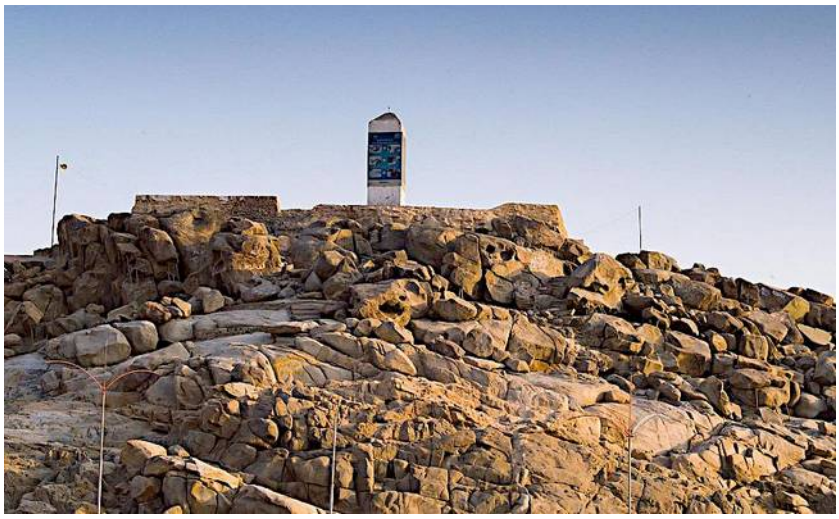
Standing on Mount Arafat

When the man opened his eyes, he saw the two were indeed standing on Mount Arafat... He thought perhaps Tajuddin had not travelled for the pilgrimage like he would have had to but had simply teleported himself to Makkah.

It was once reported by a certain Abdur Rahman that after a hajj pilgrimage to Makkah, Tajuddin was seen on Mount Arafat. A pilgrim from India witnessed his presence and recognised him as the pious and famed personality from his country, about whom he had only heard before. When the man approached the saint and asked for his name and where exactly he lived, Tajuddin told him his name. He also told him that he was a resident of Nagpur's lunatic asylum. The man was surprised, as he did not expect to hear that such a noble being would reside in a lunatic asylum. The saint was then out of his sight.

When the man returned after completing the pilgrimage, he was determined to first pay a visit to the saint in Nagpur whom he met on Mount Arafat before going to his own place. Upon reaching Nagpur, he began searching for the lunatic asylum. People in Nagpur guided him to find the asylum. An hour before he reached it, however, Tajuddin had already informed his companions about the man's coming. His arrival was thus anticipated.

After welcoming the man and leading him to Tajuddin, he heartily greeted the saint, and the two of them sat and discussed things for quite some time. Suddenly, the man thought it would be nice to witness a *karaamat* by the great saint he had been fortunate to meet. As soon as this thought arose, the man saw Tajuddin standing some distance away from him. He was sure he did not walk away, but somehow, he disappeared and instantly reappeared where he was now standing. He got up and went over to Tajuddin, who told him to place his index finger over his eyes for a moment. When he did this, Tajuddin asked him, "O old man! Would this happen to be Mount Arafat, where we met during the hajj?"



Mount Arafat (in 2021)

When the man opened his eyes, he saw that the two were indeed standing on Mount Arafat. Not only that, but they were wearing the pilgrim's robe, and the same crowd of other pilgrims was there, too. Tajuddin then said, "*Haoji Hazrat! Ham yunhi aate jaate* (So, that's how we come and go)". The man wanted to see more, so he asked to be taken to the dwelling place of the Lord of the Worlds. Tajuddin smiled and responded by saying, "O old man! Why now, to a place that is very far away? Perhaps another time, you will see for yourself."

Upon hearing these words of the saint, the man found himself back inside the lunatic asylum in Nagpur, standing before him. He was grateful for the privilege of meeting and talking with such a pious and holy personality for the second time, not just witnessing but also experiencing a *karaamat* himself. But it made him wonder. He thought perhaps Tauddin had not travelled for the pilgrimage like he would have had to but had simply teleported himself to Makkah and returned to Nagpur the same way. Anyhow, the man returned to his own city and remained in awe of the great saint.

A Haji's Hand Revitalised

The man felt warm energy entering his hand... his hand was able to function normally again... Tajuddin then... instructed him to go for hajj in gratitude to Allah for the cure.

A rich man named Sardar Khan had a paralysed hand in which blood did not flow properly. His father-in-law took him one day to meet Tajuddin at the asylum. When they reached there, they were told to sit and wait under a neem tree. That moment, a *haji* came, asking about the saint's whereabouts [see Standing on Mount Arafat]. He revealed that he met Tajuddin in Makkah while performing the *hajj* and was told he resided at this lunatic asylum in Nagpur.

The superintendent doctor, Dr. Patel Sheri Kashinath Rao, who replaced Dr. Abdul Majeed when he retired, heard all this talk. He knew well that Tajuddin had been locked in his cell for the past 21 days and that whenever he opened it, Tajuddin would always be found sitting inside. However, he was also very familiar with the numerous reports of him being seen in multiple places simultaneously, so tears flowed from his eyes as he heard the *haji* speak. Silently, he felt praise and admiration for Tajuddin. He remained a staunch devotee of the Muslim saint, even as a strict Brahmin.

Tajuddin arrived from his room at that precise moment. He advised the doctor not to make the matter lengthy, saying, "*Lambi na karore* (Keep it short)". He then turned to Sardar Khan and, while holding his finger, said: "There is too much pain. It's a foul disease." As he was saying this, the man felt warm energy entering his hand. After repeating these words a few times, Tajuddin let go of the man's hand with a jerk. Sardar Khan found his hand was able to function normally again, so he was extremely grateful for the healing. Tajuddin then addressed him as "Haji Sardar Khan", and instructed him to go for hajj in gratitude to Allah for the cure. He also advised him not to disclose the matter to others or unduly praise him, saying, "*Lambi na karore* (Don't spread it)". Sardar Khan had the felicity of performing the hajj pilgrimage next year, too, like the other *haji* who had just returned from one.

Excellent Performance

He was very impressed by the excellent performance of the police constable in question... He was singled out as a role model for others due to exceeding the expectations of his professional duties.

A police constable was among the frequent visitors to the lunatic asylum to enjoy *darshan* of Tajuddin. His heart had become attached to the young saint. However, he became a concern for a senior officer at the police station because his visits were becoming too frequent while he was supposed to be on duty. He reprimanded the policeman for going there and reminded him of his professional duties and the need to give it priority. The constable refused to stop going to the lunatic asylum and even dared to say, "Do what you want. I won't stop going there."

The senior officer threatened to report the matter at a higher level, which would lead to him being dismissed. The policeman simply shrugged off the threat and did not change his ways. He continued to visit the lunatic asylum the next day. Upon seeing him, Tajuddin said:

> *Beshak Tajuddin bacha lega, magar naukri karo. Aap ko tarakki bhi milegi. Tajuddin will surely save you, but do your professional duties. You will be promoted.*

It so happened that the next time the police constable went to work at the police station, he was informed about his promotion. What Tajuddin had told him a day earlier was thus confirmed. However, it was surprising given that only a couple of days before, he was told off for neglecting his duty and wasting time at a lunatic asylum during his shifts. What happened was that another senior officer, who did not know about the constable's visits to a lunatic asylum, was reviewing the performance of all police constables at the station. He was very impressed by the excellent performance of the police constable in question. There was no sign of any neglect, distraction, or other shortcoming. Rather, he was singled out as a role model for others due to exceeding the expectations of his professional duties. From then on, the police constable continued to visit his heart's desire, the one who first gave him the good news of his promotion, but was also careful to fulfil his professional duties as well.

From One Saint to Another

Dr. Pownaskar was thus taken care of by three different saints in turn, who worked together to advance him advance spiritually.

A doctor by the name of Pownaskar was originally practising in Patna and longed to secure a good job. One day, when he was on his way to the river Ganga for a dip, a Brahmachari Baba, who was actually a *pir* (holy man) in disguise, attracted him by his glowing countenance. After a short conversation with him, Dr. Pownaskar pleaded for his blessing and promised him that if he got a good job, he would take him on a pilgrimage.

Not long after, the doctor was posted as a medical officer in Nagpur. The *pir* was pleased to hear this news. The doctor immediately fulfilled his promise despite realising he was a *pir*, so the *pir* went on a pilgrimage to Makkah. After returning, he accompanied the doctor to Nagpur, and upon arrival, he led the doctor straight away to the gate of the lunatic asylum. Standing there, he called out loudly, "O brother Tajuddin! Here's our boy. I'm handing him over to you now. Please take care of him."

After saying this, the *pir* vanished, leaving the onlookers stunned and in utter amazement. Tajuddin was sitting under a tree inside the asylum when he heard the *pir's* call and replied, "Yes sir! He's from our family. Where else can he go?"

Pownaskar was taken aback not only by this dialogue between the two saints but also by the fact, as he came to know later, that they were complete strangers to each other. After spending some time at the asylum to perform doctorly duties, Tajuddin told Pownaskar to go to Sakori and meet Upasani Maharaj there. In Sakori, he found that he had been handed over to another saint and that he was a disciple of Sai Baba of Shirdi [see The Golden Tree]. The religious label of neither the doctor nor the saints made any difference in his experience. Dr. Pownaskar was thus taken care of by three different saints in turn, who worked together to advance him spiritually, beginning with Pir Sahib of Patna.

Certificated without Inspection

He knew he would never have passed. It was with Tajuddin's help that he was able to able to get the certificate and the job he sought.

A man named Syed Abdul Wahab was blessed more than once by Tajuddin, to whom he was introduced by his friend. The man wanted to apply for a job in a post office in Nagpur in 1907, for which he required a medical fitness certificate, but he was suffering from scab disease. Concerned that he would not be accepted, he sought the advice of his friend Abdul Hafeez. It was he who advised him to meet the saint to secure his employment.

Abdul Wahab went along with his maternal uncle to meet Tajuddin at the lunatic asylum. They asked the watchman about his whereabouts so that they could find him easily, but he led them directly to the saint himself. At the time, Tajuddin was sitting under a tree with a very large group of people around him. When the two approached the gathering and gave salaam, Tajuddin returned the salaam and said to them, and then the people gathered, "Come nearer, O brothers from Madras. They have come to gain employment and will gain it."

The whole crowd turned their attention to the two men, and those in their way moved to allow them to pass through to sit before their master. When they were sitting before Tajuddin, Abdul Wahab began to press his feet in affection. After doing this for some time, however, Tajuddin became unconscious and motionless. When the two men checked his pulse, it was no longer beating; he was not breathing, and his body was cold. The other people were not the least agitated because they knew their master had only diverted his attention from this world temporarily.

Seeing the saint's condition, the two men became very worried and disturbed. They kept checking his pulse and heartbeat, but there was no sign or evidence of life. Eventually, after about fifteen minutes of trying to revive him, the men were sure that he had left this world. As soon as Abdul Wahab opened his lips to announce this, Tajuddin uttered, "Ya

Hoo", opened his eyes, and stood up, saying something that was not clearly understood. Tajuddin then turned to the two men and told them to "Go and then return! What can the Englishman do?"

The watchman told the two men that what they had come for had been done and helped them out of the crowd. The next day, Abdul Wahab went to the medical office to see the outcome. It so happened that his name was included at the bottom of a list of 35 people waiting for a medical certificate. However, before his time arrived, the main doctor had to leave. After returning, he asked the assistant doctor if anyone remained to be checked and was told that there wasn't. In this way, Abdul Wahab did not have to undergo checking, but he was unsure if this affected his getting a certificate.

Anyhow, he returned to the office at the appointed time to collect the certificate and was issued it without question. If the inspection had taken place, he knew he would never have passed. It was with Tajuddin's help that he was able to get the certificate and the job he sought. From then on, Abdul Wahab would go and visit Tajuddin to press and massage his feet whenever he could.

(Baba Tajuddin being massaged by Kochwan Hera Lal)

The Fragrance of Musk

He was pressing the master's feet... To his amazement, he could smell the fragrance of musk coming from both his hands.

A young man named Syed Abdul Wahab was once returning from a visit to Tajuddin at the lunatic asylum [see Certificated without Inspection]. A man at the main gate asked where he was coming from. Abdul Wahab replied that he was returning after having visited Tajuddin. The man asked for proof of his visit, though he really knew where he was coming from. He said, "How would I know you are coming back from there? There must be some evidence."

The hospital's main entrance in a later period

Abdul Wahab did not know what evidence he could give, but he replied that he was pressing the master's feet. The man then told him to smell both his hands, which he did. To his amazement, he could smell the fragrance of musk coming from both his hands. The man then grabbed both hands and would not let go. He made him touch his body and clothes, and in this way, the fragrance of musk spread all over him. Abdul Wahab did the same on his own clothing, too.

Even after returning to his house, Abdul Wahab could smell the fragrance of musk coming from his hands. He did not know who that man was who asked for evidence of his visit, but it was because of him that the fragrance was noticed and spread. It was now all over his clothing, and it remained noticeable for some years. For this reason, he kept that dress with him as a blessing. He considered himself fortunate to have this evidence because he recalled that once when he was in Tajuddin's presence, a group of students from Aligarh Muslim University had a photo taken with him, but when the photo was developed, Tajuddin was not in that photo. The students were clearly present, but an image of the saint who was standing with them was missing.

The Girl who Sought Wealth

Among those who came for darshan of Tajuddin was a small girl with an inner thirst for gaining [spiritual] wealth... She was destined to undergo special training to become a special disciple.

Among those who came for *darshan* of Tajuddin was a small girl with an inner thirst for gaining wealth. She had the same name as the saint's mother, namely Maryambi, short for Maryam Bibi. She was no ordinary girl, so she was not an ordinary guest or one-time visitor. In fact, Tajuddin had been especially waiting for her to come for many years. She was destined to undergo special training to become a special *mureed* (disciple). The wealth she sought was not material wealth but spiritual wealth [see Spiritual Wealth].

When Maryambi arrived at the asylum with her brother, and Tajuddin first saw her physically before him, he stood up immediately. He told her that he had been waiting for her to come for twelve years. He added, "At last, you have come", and "Keep coming to stay well (*aate jaate, achhe rahte*)". He then took her arm and broke her bangles with a stone. It signified her freedom from external bindings and worldly attachments and, thus, her new spiritual connection with the master. He then told her to keep coming, to which she complied.

Subsequently, over the course of some days, Tajuddin made Maryambi undergo a period of intensive training. It involved standing still at certain spots for prolonged periods without food, first in the asylum grounds and then in a dangerous deserted spot in the woods. She

successfully accomplished her training, and in this way, she eventually gained the spiritual wealth she sought [see Spiritual Wealth].

Maryambi proved to be a very pious *mureed*. Due to her piety, Tajuddin never ignored her requests. On some occasions, whenever the master was in an aggressive stage of *jalaal* (loftiness) and his *mureeds* were unable to calm him down easily, they would bring Maryambi over to help calm him down. Normally, he would calm down immediately, with only rare exceptions [see In Search of a Guide]. Maryambi was often also called when there was some other perplexing situation, such as when her master would be in the state of *istighraq* (spiritual absorption) for a very long time, and people were waiting to meet him [see Leaves that Turned into Insects].

For these reasons, Maryambi's spiritual guide, Baba Tajuddin, the *Siraj as-Salikeen* (Sun of Spiritual Seekers), regarded her as 'the tip of his tongue' and 'the key to his lock'. Also, whenever certain guests came, Baba Tajuddin would often advise them to go and meet Maryambi first before coming to him. His words were: "*Mere paas aane se pehle Maryam Amman ki khidmat me haazri di jae* (Pay a visit to Maryam Amma before coming to me)". Given that she had successfully gained the spiritual wealth she sought, she was even able to deal with many of the problems and other needs of the guests, leaving only the more complex, delicate, and other important cases for her master to handle [See Spiritual Wealth].

Bestowing without Giving

He did not see a Muslim man but Krishnaji instead. This sight dazzled him... Tajuddin had a certain way of bestowing something without it being obvious how he had given.

A Hindu man named Gayadin once visited Waki to honour the idols of some Hindu deities. Having done that, he expressed his desire to Kashinath to meet Tajuddin, as he had heard about his miraculous abilities.

Kashinath took him to the lunatic asylum to meet Tajuddin. The very moment he first set his eyes on the saint, he did not see a Muslim man but Krishnaji instead. This sight dazzled him. It took a short while before he came to his senses and saw Tajuddin in his normal form. Tajuddin told him to go home and promised he would visit him by his tamarind tree six months later and bring him back. Tajuddin fulfilled his promise and brought him back exactly six months later.

Gayadin remained with Tajuddin as a Muslim believer and devotee, and Tajuddin renamed him Kamaluddin. One day, when Tajuddin was no longer confined at the asylum, Kamaluddin accompanied his master to the woods, where they came across a well beside a small dry pond. A few wild animals were present, and they were very thirsty. Tajuddin instructed Kamaluddin to give them water to drink. Kamaluddin extracted water from the well and refilled the pond. After the animals had satisfied their thirst by drinking enough water, Tajuddin told Kamaluddin that he would be rewarded with the equivalent of one pilgrimage to Makkah.

It may be noted that Tajuddin had a certain way of bestowing something without it being obvious how he had given. As Qazi Amjad Ali [see No Food but Tea and Vigils] would say:

Sakhaawat ka kuch tumhaari andaaz ha Baba,

Tumhe dete nahi dekha magar jholi bhari dekhi.

You have a certain way of showing generosity, Baba,

I've never seen you give [directly], but I've seen the receiver get what they wanted.

The Maharaja's Greatest Joy

Something else had come to occupy the Maharaja's heart far more deeply. His meeting with Tajuddin... he acquired a new-found love in his life for the man of God, and that was his greatest joy.

Maharaja Raghuji Rao Bhonsle V

The fifth deposed Maharaja of Nagpur, Raja Bahadur Shri Mant Raghuji Rao Bhonsle V (1872-1958), the representative of the old Bhonsle Maratha Rajas of Nagpur, owned many lands in Sakardara, Waki and other areas. He lived in his royal palace in Sakaradara Bagh, known as Lal Kothi (Red Mansion), part of the senior Bhonsle estate. Once, his daughter-in-law, the wife of his son Vanayak Rao, was expecting a baby, and she was suffering from intense labour pains. A whole day passed without delivery. Professional nurses and doctors were unable to handle the situation. Due to the pain, Rani Sahiba became unconscious, and by evening time, there was little hope of her recovering.

The specialists scrutinised her condition and came to the conclusion that the child had expired inside the womb. They advised that if it was not extracted, then the life of Rani Sahiba would also be at risk. The Maharaja and Maharani did not accept this decision. Early next morning at six o'clock, while Raghuji was performing *puja* rituals at the palace, his driver entered and suggested going to the lunatic asylum where there was a man of God from whom many people were getting favours. The driver was a Muslim devotee of Tajuddin, to whom he was referring. The Maharaja agreed and instructed him to take him there immediately. Raja Raghuji was so perturbed that he did not bother to change his *puja* outfit and went barefoot.

The driver drove at speed through downtown and cantonment areas until they quickly reached the main gate of the lunatic asylum. There, they were welcomed by the superintendent and a senior doctor, who

rushed to the gate as soon as they found out that the Maharaja was coming. Due to having no footwear on, the driver suggested for the Maharaja to stay inside the car and offered to go on his behalf to meet the saint. Tajuddin was sitting on the lawn at the time in a state of trance outside his chamber. The driver paid homage and pleaded respectfully, "*Huzoor*, the Maharaja has come from Sakardara and wants permission to meet you and gain blessings from you". Tajuddin replied:

> *Ham faqeer jee Hazrat. Hamare se Raja ka kya kaam, jee Hazrat?*
>
> *We are the faqeer type, respected one. What is the need of Raja Sahib from people like us?*

The driver begged for the saint to reconsider, as it would be a great benevolence, and to do something for the Maharaja. After a moment of silence and pondering, Tajuddin indicated his permission for the driver to bring the Maharaja over. The driver sprinted to his other master and told him, "Rajaji! Come quickly and grasp the saint's feet immediately".

The Maharaja came out of the car and did as his driver advised. Tajuddin looked at him and gave him glad tidings:

> *Idhar kya karte jee Hazrat. Udhar jana, larka paida huwa, to khushian manana.*
>
> *What are you doing here, respected one? Go there where the boy has been born, and celebrate this occasion with happiness and joy!*

The driver was familiar with the saint's style of saying things, so he advised Raja Sahib to seek his permission to leave. He told the Maharaja, "Let's go, master; our request has been accepted with a reward". He also

took out his watch from his pocket and noted down the exact time Tajuddin gave them the news of the birth. He then took the Maharaja back to the palace immediately.

As the Maharaja was approaching the palace in his car, he heard celebratory sounds of drums, trumpets, and flutes. He was greeted with happy and smiling faces all around. There was jubilation. The atmosphere was completely different to how it was when he left earlier in the morning. The people gave him the good news, and they congratulated him and welcomed him joyfully. The entire royal family was in joy. Now he knew that the saint's words were true and that he had been blessed with a grandson. It was a moment of great joy for the Maharaja, but an even greater joy awaited him yet.

The joyful mood prompted the Maharaja to have the treasury opened and for money to be distributed to the poor and needy in honour of the birth of the new prince. The driver advised his master to have the exact time checked when the birth took place and to have a horoscope prepared. The pundits confirmed it was the exact same time when Tajuddin uttered those words, which gave the Maharaja the glad tidings.

The birth of the prince was no doubt an occasion of great joy for everyone, but something else had come to occupy the Maharaja's heart far more deeply. His meeting with Tajuddin had captivated him so profoundly that he acquired a new-found love in his life for the man of God, and that was his greatest joy.

From a Prison to a Palace

> Despite the comfort of the palatial accommodations... he preferred to eat little and sleep on the floor. After all, a faqeer always remains a faqeer... [it] was like a place of confinement for him... it was a utopian oasis amid the misery and madness of the world outside.

The divine work of Tajuddin continued after some devotees secured their master's release from imprisonment at the lunatic asylum on 21 September 1908, when he was 47 years old. This ended Tajuddin's sixteen-year-long stay at the asylum, to the delight of thousands of his devotees and admirers.

The idea of having Tajuddin released from the asylum was that of Raja Raghuji Rao after the saint hinted to him that he wanted to change his seat. He called Raghuji Rao his "elder brother (*barra bhai*)". The asylum authorities initially refused to release Tajuddin because the area was prospering from so many visitors. The saint reassured them:

Ye jaggah khaali nahi rahegi.

This place will never be vacant.

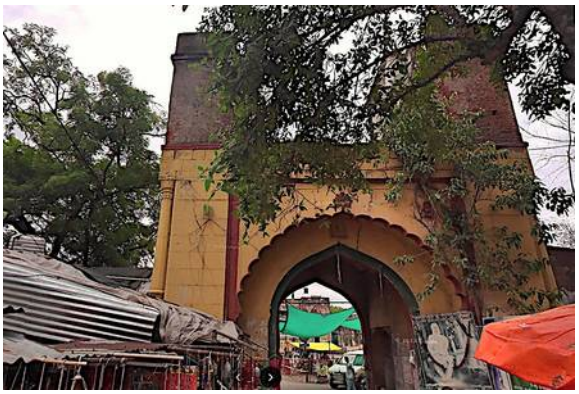
With these words, Tajuddin meant that saintly people would still be present at the lunatic asylum. He had trained enough patients there to make these words true. Among them was the accomplished Fatah Muhammad Shah, who remained there for the rest of his earthly life as Baba Tajuddin's representative [see Ocean of Spiritual Grace].

With the saint's consent, the Maharaja paid a sum of two thousand rupees as a security bond to the asylum authorities to allow Tajuddin to be discharged from the lunatic asylum and reside in his Lal Kothi palace in Sakaradara Bagh instead. The papers of surety were submitted through Sir Benjamin Robertson [see Healed by Inhaling and Favours of Sir Benjamin], the Chief Commissioner of the Central Provinces, who approved the application. As news spread that Tajuddin would soon be released, preparations began in earnest to welcome the saint in a new phase of his life. The public was overjoyed. It was a cause for a citywide celebration. The preparations were especially swiftly underway at the palace where Tajuddin was now going to be based.

Tajuddin garlanded

Tajuddin was brought from the asylum to the royal palace in a procession attended by thousands of people from all religions and castes. It was an impressive panorama. He was in his usual attire as a *faqeer* but mounted on an elephant along with the Maharaja, who was well-dressed. Accompanying them was a large convoy of royal guards and knights dressed in colourful attire, seated on decorated horses and camels on three sides. A royal band marched and performed at the front, singing praises in the saint's honour. While the carnival passed through the cantonment and main bazaar, people lined up on both sides to display their love. They paid their respects and showered the saint with flowers, filling the air with colourful joy.

The path to the Lal Kothi palace (present times)



The Lal Kothi palace gate Baba Tajuddin passed through (present times)

The Maharaja had the large main gate of the palace opened as they approached nearer to it. A mass of people in long lines waited eagerly to pay homage to the saint. He arranged for him to reside in a special portion of the palace near the front, with a lawn and fountain nearby. From now on, this palace was to be one of Tajuddin's main places of stay instead of the dismal environment of the lunatic asylum. People could visit him easily without any fee or other hindrance. It often happened

that the saint would mention a visitor's name and say something about them, and that person would then arrive.

The Maharaja also provided Tajuddin with a *baggi* (horse carriage) and servants, including strong young *pehlvans* for his *seva* (service). Since Tajuddin smoked beedi, Maulana Muhammad Abdul Ahad Bhopalee was appointed always to carry beedi and matches with him to present them whenever he wanted. Normally, Tajuddin never accepted a beedi from anyone else. For his meals, the Maharaja arranged for one servant to always be on standby with two big plates and a water pitcher on his shoulder. These were replaced with fresh food and water every six hours, even if the saint did not eat or sip the water. Sometimes, Tajuddin would only masticate two or three bites, and sometimes, he would not eat at all for two or three continuous days.

The Maharaja often presented himself at the saint's service as well while continuing to follow his own Sufistic way of life. Despite the comfort of the palatial accommodation made available to Tajuddin and the never-ending supplies for his sustenance, he preferred to eat little and sleep on the floor. After all, a *faqeer* always remains a *faqeer* with the barest of necessities and

few worldly possessions. He typically wore one long tunic and walked barefoot outside, exposed to the elements. In fact, he saw the palace as a place of confinement. It was only the Maharaja's persistent appeals and the ease with which people could reach him that made him stay there. It was situated one and a half miles away from the railway station.

The route to the palace extended from the central road, lined on both sides by small huts in which Tajuddin's '*bachche* (children)' lived, who were his devotees. In due course, the area became more populated. The palace also served symbolically as an anti-colonial environment because it was the site where the British defeated Nagpur's independent rulers in the Battle of Nagpur on 16 December 1817. Above all, with Tajuddin's presence, it was a utopian oasis amid the misery and madness outside.

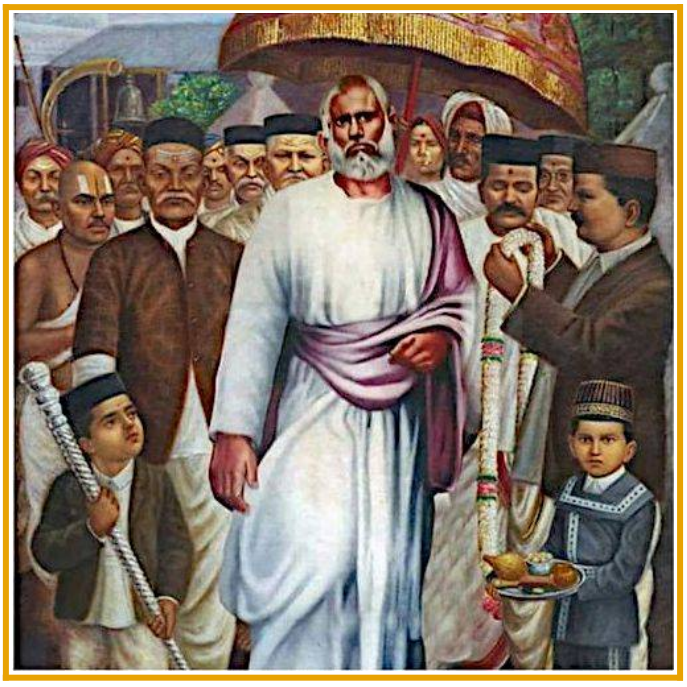
Tajuddin in an early group photo after his release from imprisonment

Forty days later, Tajuddin moved to stay with Patel Kashinath Rao in Waki for a more serene location more than twelve miles away. He eventually returned to Sakardara at Raghuji's insistence but kept visiting Waki as his second base for several days on end. He moved to the palace permanently in 1920 after Maryam Bibi died [see Spiritual Wealth].

Dedicated to Serve

Tajuddin's typical day was spent entirely dedicating himself to serving those who came to meet him for various reasons... People flocked to the palace day and night to meet the saint.

Tajuddin's typical day was spent entirely dedicating himself to serving those who came to meet him for various reasons. He was always busy listening to their concerns or difficulties with kindness and sympathy. He had been doing this for a long time before and while living at the lunatic asylum, but his release and stay at the palace in Sakaradara and other frequented spots in and near Nagpur began a new phase in serving humanity.



People flocked to the palace day and night to meet the saint, bringing with them food, *mithai*, garlands, clothes, and other gifts. These were mostly redistributed among the poor. The visitors were from all walks of life, irrespective of their status, religion, or caste. Some sought his blessings, while others came for his assistance. It included the downtrodden and *tawaif* (courtesans) [see The World as a Scorpion]. It also included the addicted, who were told, "*Baba ke bachhe nasha nahi karte*" (Baba's children don't get addicted).

Tajuddin normally spoke in the Madrasi dialect when addressing people's concerns. He would use the same title as the speaker, such as '*Baba*' or '*Bhai*'. He often spoke in allusions, used allegories, or quoted Quranic or poetic verses. Sometimes, he murmured, used unclear or harsh words, or uttered something that seemed irrelevant at first but

whose meaning became clear later. Sometimes, it so happened that nothing was said verbally, but the person wanting to ask something received the reply, explanation, or solution to whatever their concern was in their mind. So everyone got a response somehow or other.

On some occasions, it also happened that Tajuddin became so weak from constantly dealing with people's problems that he could not sit up easily. When the influx of people grew too thick, he would sometimes say aloud, "You may all leave. All of your issues are resolved." Satisfied, they would leave and find the problems were indeed resolved, just as the saint told them they would. Whether he was sitting, standing, or walking at the time, their difficulties would be eased or removed. Those who came in grief, sorrow, or distress usually left satisfied and happy.

Sometimes, Tajuddin left the palace for a morning stroll after the regular tea time of 4am and occasionally returned as late as the afternoon or evening. He was a swift walker. Sometimes, it looked as if he was floating in the air. Artists of various kinds, singers, and musicians eager to display their skills accompanied the saint wherever he went. Over time, the visitors became accustomed to the saint's manner of speaking and his condition of being in a trance at times. Shops also sprang up over time along the route to the palace. Mobile sellers, especially confectioners and florists, were also present. Sweets, garlands, and flower petals were thus easily available. When the crowds were thick and uncontrollable, Tajuddin had to scold the people, but his devotees would never leave him.

The devotees, too, did what they could to serve the saint and support his spiritual mission. Apart from the plentiful food offerings, those fortunate enough to be nearby would seek the opportunity to massage his feet and legs. Once, a certain Jalaluddin Khan was sitting near Tajuddin and saw some people massaging his legs. He was feeling envious about not getting the chance to massage him. While he was just having this thought, Tajuddin immediately turned to him and said, "I never keep any of my friends bereft or feel deprived. I am dedicated to serving. Come, it is now your turn." And so Jalaluddin got his opportunity. It was out of love for their spiritual master that people desired to serve the one who served them.

The Medic Sadhu

"The real path for a devotee to realise God is seva..." This was a precious medicine for the medic sadhu... "Seva is the only truly tried-and-tested way to realise God... this noble act would be a thousand times more valuable than an outward ritual."

A *sadhu* once came to meet Tajuddin, the Crown of Saints, not long after his release from the asylum in 1908. The *sadhu* had a bag around his neck. Because it contained small bottles of medicine, he was dubbed a 'medic *sadhu*'. In those days, Tajuddin would enter a state of spiritual ecstasy, and after returning from it, he would then respond to the concerns put to him. Usually, it took only a short time, but in some complex cases, he had to leave the palace to roam about.

The *sadhu's* concern was his spiritual development. He desired to realise God. Tajuddin advised him to go and live in a small village so that he could devote himself to God all day without forgetting His omnipresence for even a single moment. He added: "The real path for a devotee to realise God is *seva* (service to humanity), and you have been tasked to be of service by me."

This was precious medicine for the medic *sadhu*. Tajuddin then recited a couplet to emphasise the importance of taking this approach to realising or getting close to God:

Seva is the only truly tried-and-tested way to realise God,

Donning holy garb and prayer alone won't lead you to God.

The point of the Crown of Saints was that merely wearing the garb of a *sadhu* or *faqeer*, or only doing *puja* or praying *namaz*, although beneficial, do not in themselves lead a person to realise God. Something more is needed, and that is to serve fellow beings and creatures. Tajuddin explained further that the key was to remove people's causes of suffering or misery. By doing so, he said: "If you succeed even for a single person, this noble act would be a thousand times more valuable than an outward ritual because the heart is very delicate."

Alleviating Poverty and Hunger

Tajuddin's assistance was also directed at alleviating hunger and poverty in the area... Many onlookers were left shedding tears at seeing how much the soft-hearted saint was concerned for the couple and the way he assisted them.

Besides enlightening, healing, and saving people from dangers, much of Tajuddin's assistance was also directed at alleviating hunger and poverty in the area. Normally, most of the food given to him as gifts was redistributed among the hungry or those present, or else he would only taste a little before giving it away.

Once, Tajuddin was passing through Patansaongi village, about 14 miles away from the centre of Nagpur to the north, when he stopped at the dilapidated house of a frail and poor old couple. They were finding it extremely difficult to grind millet for its grain. They were panting with exhaustion. He came down from his *baggi*, entered their house, sat down beside them, and helped them with what they were struggling to do by hand. Within a short period, all the millet was completely grounded. He then gathered all the flour and immediately left the place, all without saying a single word. Meanwhile, many onlookers were left shedding tears at seeing how much the soft-hearted saint was concerned for the couple and the way he assisted them.

The Hungry Special Guest

He was then informed that the food he was eating was specially sent for him by the saint himself. The man broke down in tears of gratitude... That day, he was a truly special guest.

One day, a whole day passed with Tajuddin serving a multitude of people at the palace, and some were still left waiting outside. Some of the visitors that day were aristocrats who expected to be treated as special guests and given ample time and attention. Meanwhile, a poor and hungry visitor who arrived from afar on foot in the morning was waiting patiently under a tree outside. He chose to wait there for his turn because the sheer number and status of people meeting the saint did not make it likely he would get a chance any time soon.

When the time came for the evening meal, devotees presented food to their master, but he did not touch any of it. He ordered for it to be given immediately to a guest waiting outside instead. He told them, “Let our special guest waiting under the tree be served first. Then we shall eat.”

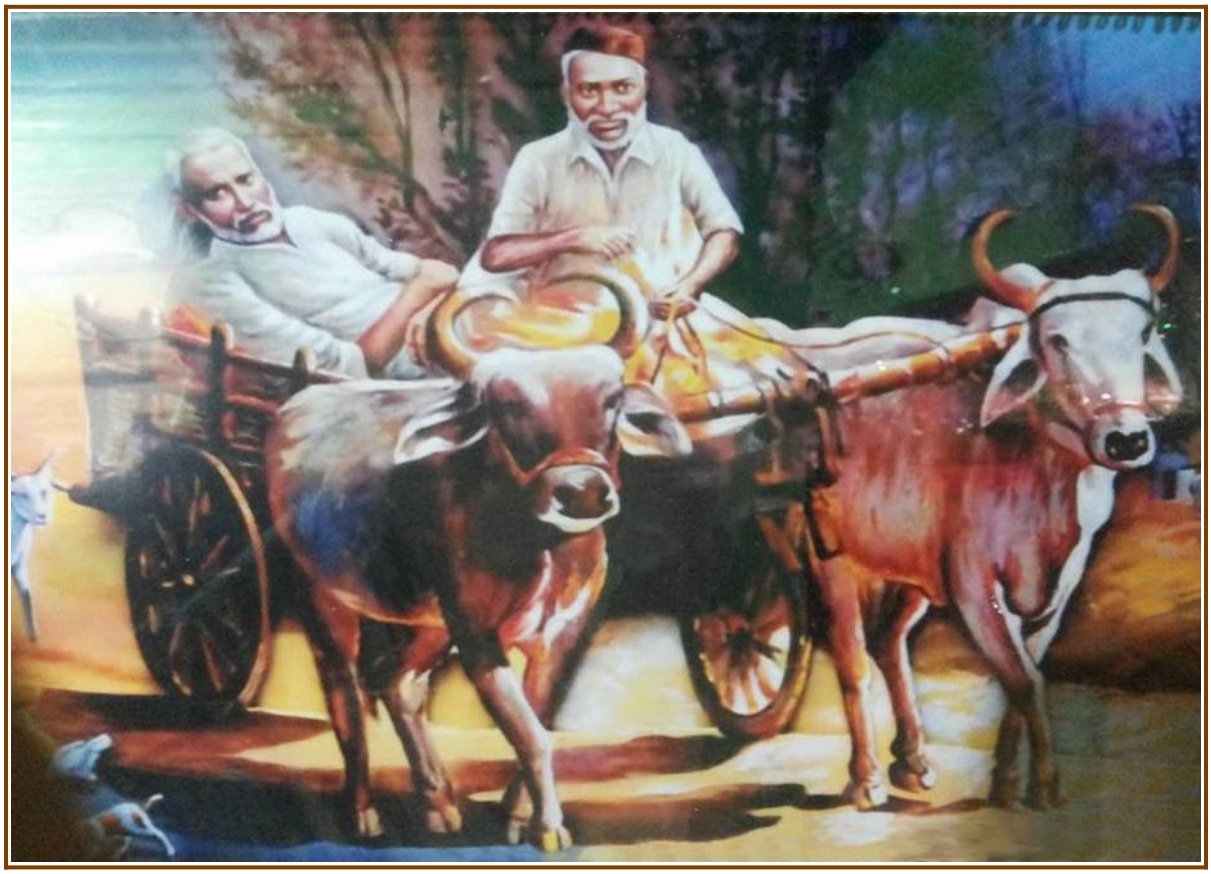
Despite searching, the people could not find any such guest nearby who they thought would be in need, so they returned to the palace. Tajuddin again instructed the same, this time in a sterner tone, for the food to be given to the guest sitting under a tree outside. The devotees made another attempt to find that guest, with a clearer description of where to find him. This time, they saw him sitting under a tree, exactly as their master had described.

After giving him the food, the devotees asked where he had come from. The hungry man told them he had come from very far away due to poverty and was eager to meet the saint. He was then informed that the food he was eating was specially sent for him by the saint himself. The man broke down in tears of gratitude. He disclosed that he had not eaten for the last two days and that he had walked all the way from where he had come to meet Tajuddin. When the guest had eaten a little to extinguish his hunger, the devotees invited him inside as a guest so that his desire to meet their master could be fulfilled as well. That day, he was a truly special guest.

Trips on a Cart

When led by the horse Bahadur, it was never reined in. It always received its travel instructions from the saint telepathically. It would always wait for his master's mental signal before proceeding.

When not present in his room to meet people who had come to meet him, Tajuddin would often make a round of the city to reach those who were unable to come for whatever reason, or he would travel to some other specific destination as the need arose. These trips were usually on a cart or carriage led by a bull or horse. Their carer was Hera Lal Kochwan. The horse was gifted to Tajuddin by Muhammad Ismail Khan, known as Chhatka Patel, from Balaghat, who bought it for two hundred rupees from a wealthy villager. It was a young foal at the time, but when it came into Tajuddin's service, its strength grew quickly, enough to pull his master's cart. Tajuddin named his horse Bahadur.



Whenever news spread of a planned trip, people would wait eagerly for the saint to come out of the palace. They would gather outside in anticipation as the time came closer and keep an eye on the gate, which was often as early as four o'clock in the morning after drinking tea. When the door of the saint's room opened, and he came out, there would be a clamour that "Baba Sahib is coming!" It was a cause for celebration and for crowds of his devotees to express love for their master.

Confectioners were on standby to give *mithai*, and florists had their garlands ready and petals for people to shower over the saint. Servants would help their master put his *jubba* on and place the turban on his head. He was usually accompanied by a few of his *pehlvans* as well. He would then sit on his carriage after putting the garlands around the neck of his animal. When led by the horse Bahadur, it was never reined in. It always received its travel instructions from the saint telepathically. It would always wait for his master's mental signal before proceeding.

Tajuddin would pass through the streets and lanes of Nagpur and halt at certain places to give more people a chance to see and meet him. Whenever people saw his carriage, many would run after him to get their chance to give *salaam*, and some would continue running behind his carriage. It was a common scene to see the carriage being followed by lots of people. Whereas some would start following the carriage as soon as it left Sakardara, more joined along the way wherever they saw him arrive. Whenever he halted at certain places for some or other reason, people would rush toward the carriage to give *salaam* to the saint and shower him with flower petals. More people would then be seen from near and far, surrounding the carriage wherever it stopped.

Some people accompanied Tajuddin on long routes as well by walking alongside his carriage, either partially or the whole way. Some stayed with him for weeks on end during each visit, enduring the same difficulty of travelling, or returning sooner with his permission. Food was readily available, as many people offered it along the way, and it was then

distributed among his devotees and other poor and needy persons. Tajuddin usually returned in the evening if it was a long day trip but occasionally after midnight, sometimes as late as two o'clock.

Baba Tajuddin's baggis: one at Waki darbar (top), the shahi one at the Taj Dargah (bottom), and a grand baggi used occasionally [see A Procession to Karbala Medan]

Murmurings in His Cart

Sometimes he would give them what they wanted and convey details in clear words, but often, it was unclear what he said, so they took whatever little they understood.

It was Tajuddin's routine to pass through Nagpur's streets and lanes on his horse cart, led by Bahadur. Immersed in his passion for God, he would often be seen conversing, usually in a low but sometimes a loud voice. These discussions could only be understood by gnostics. No one else knew what he would say. People did notice, however, that Tajuddin would appear majestic and engrossed at times, and while in this state, he would admonish anyone who disturbed him with their problems.

When halted at some place or sometimes even while moving along the way, Tajuddin would talk with the people in his own peculiar style. However, only some would get the chance to greet or meet him, while others had to wait or try again another time. The main purpose of these tours and stoppages throughout the city was to give people a chance to see and talk to the saint, and they hoped to receive a verbal nugget or two, whether they understood it at the time or not.

Tajuddin usually halted to help those in need, whether they asked for it or not. He was always on the lookout for ways to console others and alleviate their difficulties. Needy folk would seek his valuable advice. Sometimes, he would give them what they wanted and convey details in clear words, but often, it was unclear what he said, so they took whatever little they understood. One such case was when the famous Ali Brothers were told to go somewhere, which left them unsure of exactly where to go [see An Appointment with Taj Baba]. Another was when Mahatma Gandhi was told that he had flown 800 crows [see Gandhiji's Crows]. In both cases, the meaning only became apparent later on.

Once, Tajuddin was passing by a college hostel when a group of Hindu students surrounded his cart and began flattering him. Then they requested him to pray for them to pass their examinations [see Six Gulab Jamans]. These tours sometimes also attracted those who had hardly heard about the saint or knew only little about him, such as Usman, who later became a staunch devotee [see Eerie Sounds in a Bungalow].

When the Carriage Flew

When it seemed the carriage could go no further to pass through the crowd, it turned its course upward and flew over the whole crowd to the amazement of all who witnessed the fantastical sight.

Once, Tajuddin was preparing to leave during a memorable late-night journey to visit Sayyad Mahmood Ali Baghdadi in Satranjipura. The people were disappointed, as they wanted to enjoy the company of both spiritual masters together for longer. A group of Satranji locals insisted that it would be an honour if they stayed the night. They could not bear the thought of them leaving. Baba Tajuddin responded, saying, "*No ko re, Tajuddin ko jaane do* (Don't stop us, please, let Tajuddin go)", but the people became more persistent, saying that it was only a matter of one night.

The two saints headed to the *baggi* and were about to leave when a huge crowd of people gathered outside to make them change their minds. Soon, the sheer number of people present was so great that it did not seem possible to get through, which is what the people wanted after all. Some of them lay down on the ground to block all possible ways of getting through altogether. However, this strategy, albeit out of love, could not prevent the magnanimous Crown of Saints from departing.

Sat in his carriage, Tajuddin instructed Hera Lal to proceed, saying: "*Chal re* (Let's go)". He proceeded as per his master's instruction. When it seemed the carriage could go no further to pass through the crowd, it turned its course upward and flew over the whole crowd to the amazement of all who witnessed the fantastical sight. In this manner, it did not need to touch a single person in the crowd, and no one could prevent the saints from leaving. Knowing they could never persuade Baba Tajuddin otherwise, when he was determined to go somewhere, no one dared to block his path ever again.

Boarded without Tickets

When Tajuddin sat inside a carriage, the whole crowd got inside... they knew they all boarded the train without tickets... Tajuddin and his devotees were able to travel unhindered on the train that day.

The grandson of Tajuddin, Muhammad Azeem, once recalled that crowds would form whenever his grandfather prepared to go someplace. One day, Tajuddin came out of the palace and headed straight to the railway station. The crowd eagerly followed behind him all the way to the station and continued inside. When Tajuddin sat inside a carriage, the whole crowd got inside as well. Azeem was sitting among them, too.

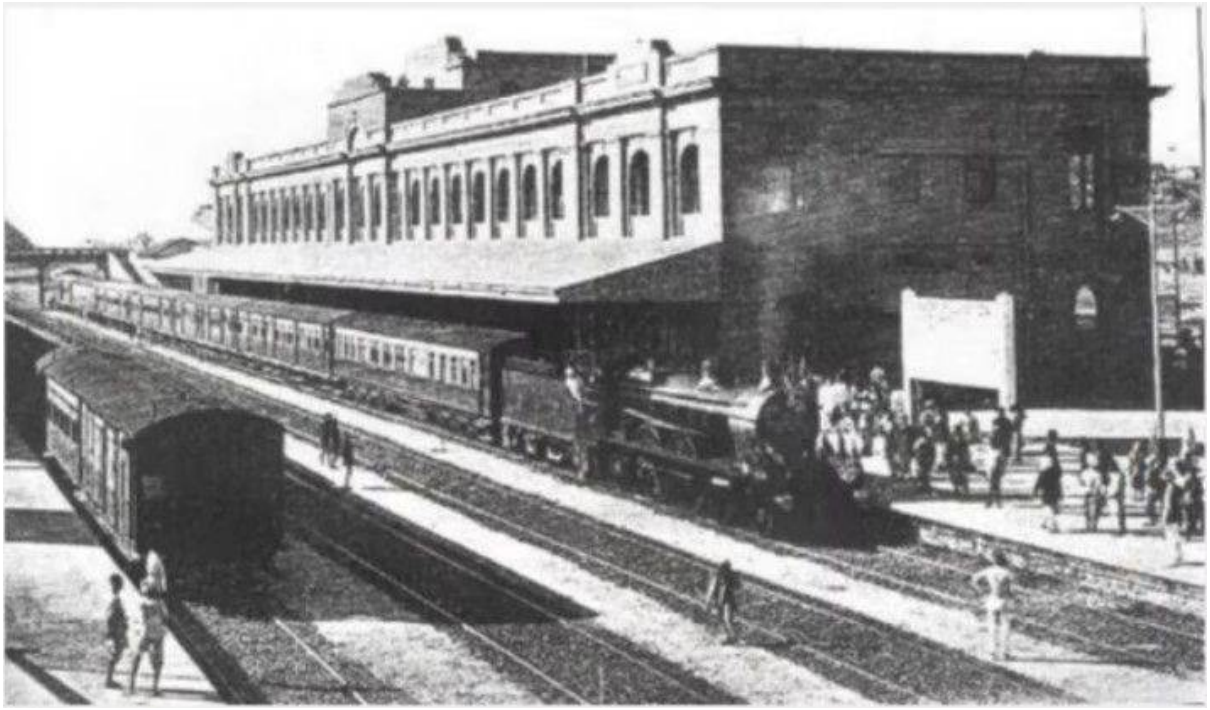
Nagpur Railway Station (historical photo)

It was not long before the ticket inspector came, asking to see their tickets. All the guests admitted they had no tickets and pointed him in their master's direction. The inspector went over to the one to whom everyone was pointing. He saw his condition, with bare feet and looking like a *faqeer*, but he still asked for his ticket and also for all the people who boarded the train with him.

Tajuddin told the inspector he was an official. The inspector said if that were so, he would have a pass with him. When Tajuddin told him it was somewhere, but he was unable to show the pass, the inspector became angry. Tajuddin then uttered the word "police", which the inspector and a few others around him barely heard. This made the inspector move on for a while with the thought that he would come back to deal with the

situation in a moment. He did not want to delay inspecting others, either.

It so happened that when the train stopped at the next station, a group of police officers with handcuffs were standing right outside the doors of the very carriage in which Tajuddin and his followers were sitting. Some devotees were worried that perhaps there was going to be a scuffle because they knew they all boarded the train without tickets. However, the police had an arrest warrant for the ticket inspector. They received a wire to arrest him, and they did. Meanwhile, Tajuddin and his devotees were able to travel unhindered on the train that day.



A train at Nagpur Railway Station in 1857

Lured from the Balcony

On hearing these last lines, Tajuddin was lured from the balcony of the palace... In a new state of ecstasy, he gently came down to the satisfaction of all those who were eagerly waiting for him.

Like how Chishti Sufi saints are, Tajuddin was also very fond of qawwalis and devotional songs. Several singers and vocal artists sang for him. Among them were Chand Khan [see Guidance for Living Well and Error: Reference source not found], Sultan Bai and Jankibai Allahabadi [see Singing without Ego], Hayat Khan [see Leaves that Turned into Insects], Girja Bai [see Tea for a Dead Girl], Surji [see The Sleeping Singer], and Deshpande [see The Gift of a Great Voice]. When several singers once came to sing in his presence, he was so overpowered with ecstasy that he took the bells from them, tied them to his feet, and started dancing and singing along with them.

On another occasion, Tajuddin was so lost in divine ecstasy for three days in a row that he kept hundreds of his devotees waiting for his *darshan* outside the palace. He did not come out even for a short while, to their great disappointment. Then, Hakim Naimuddin devised a plan to make their master come out. He called a *tawaif* singer named Lakshmi Bai and told her to sing some devotional songs that would have the desired effect. Lakshmi Bai sang a song to invite the saint to come out. It ended with the following lines:

> *No one is watching, so you may come now, my beloved,*
>
> *The blind 'n' ignorant cannot see; please come, my beloved.*

On hearing these last lines, Tajuddin was lured from the balcony of the palace. Lakshmi kept repeating these same lines till the saint was swinging in tune with it. In a new state of ecstasy, he gently came down to the satisfaction of all those who were eagerly waiting for him.

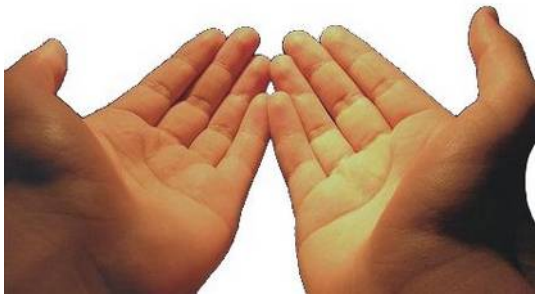
Lakshmibai (late 19th century)

The Necessary Fatihah

When the saint was reading Surah Fatihah in Nagpur, it was exactly then that his father's funeral was being performed in Jaipur.

A superintendent of the state of Jaipur named Yousuf Hussain Khan once visited the court of Tajuddin to ask him to pray for his sick father. Upon seeing the man come, the master got up, took the shawl from his shoulder, spread it on the ground, and said, "Gentleman, we shall now read Surah Fatihah".

All those who were present cupped their hands to join in the supplication, as did Yousuf as well. After reading the Fatihah Shareef, Yousuf departed and went straight to the house of Hakim Zafar Jaipuri in Nagpur. They received a cable there from Jaipur informing them that Yousuf's father had died. When Yousuf returned to Jaipur, he came to know that when the saint was reading Surah Fatihah in Nagpur, it was exactly then that his father's funeral was being performed in Jaipur.



The outcome was different in another similar case, an earlier one when a Memon once came to meet Baba Tajuddin [see A Nobleman from Bombay]. The man's father was very unwell back home, but he was reassured when Baba Tajuddin told him, "Your father is perfectly well". His condition was confirmed when the Memon returned home.

Frequented Spots in Waki

His most frequented spots were in Waki Shareef.. He would otherwise be seen sitting under a tree in the grounds, in wooded areas of Waki Woods, by the riverside, or at the Chhota Taj Bagh.

A present-day view of the hills of Waki Woods from across the river (adapted)

There were a number of special places in Nagpur's suburbs where Tajuddin spent much of his time. People who sought to find him often went there. He visited these places frequently and preferred them over staying inside the Lal Kothi palace of the Maharaja in Sakardara all the time. His most frequented spots were in Waki Shareef, about eighteen miles away from the centre of Nagpur, which Tajuddin described as 'Small Nagpur' (*Chhota Nagpur*). This was a specific zone around his abode in Waki Woods, which was mostly kept vacant. He lived in Waki Woods for around twelve years before permanently moving back to the palace.

The main place of stay in Waki was with Patel Sheri Kashinath Rao. That Tajuddin would one day live with Kashinath was foretold many years ago. Kashinath knew Tajuddin during his stay in the lunatic asylum.

Kashinath used to suffer from joint pains. He was gradually cured when, one day, Tajuddin told him:

Nanaji! Aap theek hojate. Ham tumhare ghar ayenge.

Grandfather! You'll be fine. We'll come to your house one day.

When Kashinath first brought Tajuddin to Waki Shareef from Sakardara, he arranged four buffalo carts and gave him a very warm welcome upon arrival. Like Raja Raghuji Rao at the Sakardara palace, he too spared no effort in making the saint as comfortable as possible by providing all manner of conveniences. He assigned several servants to be at his service besides himself. Still, Tajuddin hardly sat on the chair and never rested on the bed. He preferred to sit and rest on the floor. His head and feet remained bare, and he wore only a *kurta* through all seasons. He would otherwise be seen sitting under a tree in the grounds, in wooded areas of Waki Woods, by the riverside, or at the Chhota Taj Bagh (Small Taj Garden).

Present-day Chhota Taj Bagh: The arrow points to the stone where Tajuddin used to sit most often

There were also five other specific spots within *Chhota Nagpur*, not far from one another, which Tajuddin himself arranged to serve the particular needs of those who sought his help. He spent time there purely to serve humanity. These places provided disciples, devotees, and other visitors with tranquil environments free from the disturbance of city life. They were

especially ideal for healing and spiritual training and were open to everyone, irrespective of their background, gender, colour, caste, sect, and religion. It was not uncommon for Raghuji Rao to serve Tajuddin in Waki as well, nor for Kashinath to be seen at the palace in Sakaradara. Both made themselves available to serve their master wherever he chose to stay.

Mosque (masjid)

The tree where Baba Tajuddin often sat in Waki Shareef, preserved inside Waki Darbar

A spot in the corner of the backyard of *Chhota Nagpur* was designated as a *masjid* (mosque) for people to pray and engage in spiritual exercises. Tajuddin would say: "Come and sit in our mosque to do *zikr* (remember God)." This spot was specially recommended for those who were mentally disturbed, such as those who suffered from doubt or apprehension. Many psychological and spiritual conditions were remedied here, and those trained here included some famous spiritual aspirants [see Ocean of Spiritual Grace].

Healing centre for humanity (shifa khaana)

A present-day view of the Shifa/Dawaa Khaana

To serve people with health-related problems, Tajuddin arranged a spot under a mango tree, about two furlongs away to the west. He called that spot his *shifa khana* (healing centre). It was

frequented mostly by patients who had lost hope of being cured at other places.

The spot from where curative earth was taken inside the Shifa Khaana (present, now covered)

Tajuddin gave special instructions to all those who came to seek his help until they were cured of whatever illness or disease they were afflicted with. Some were instructed to simply sit there and apply the earth from that spot on their body. Otherwise, the spiritual physician's *nazar* (sight) alone was sufficient to heal them. Many people were cured here miraculously, either instantly or within a few days. He would say about this spot:

Hamare shifa khane me jo dakhil hote, woh achhe hojate.

Those who are admitted to our clinic come out healed.

Seminary (madrassah)

At a third spot further to the west beyond the clinic, under a larger mango tree, Tajuddin arranged for a *madrassah* where students would come to increase their knowledge and gain wisdom. These students enriched themselves with both worldly and spiritual knowledge. Some became geniuses and were appointed to professional positions. Others came only to pass their examinations. Tajuddin advised them to simply sit there for a while. They found that they were able to strengthen their memory, which is what helped them pass their examinations.

Court (adaalat)

A present-day view of Baba Tajuddin's Adaalat

Those who suffered a financial loss, had other material problems, or were fighting for justice were directed by Tajuddin to assemble at a fourth spot, which he called his *adaalat* (court of justice). It was about two more furlongs away from the seminary, under a huge tamarind tree on Kashinath's farm. Many of those who came here were victims of false cases and injustices in British courts. They included a man who was going to be hanged in a couple of days [see Feeding without Fire and Fuel]. They were able to have the case resolved in their favour or get released on bail.

Parade ground

A fifth spot in an open field to the north was for those seeking to gain self-control and self-discipline. They were directed to march to a parade ground and perform drills to battle against their egos. The combat training they received was not for the lesser outer jihad but for the greater inner jihad.

Waki Shareef Darbar of Baba Tajuddin

A darbar was constructed covering the

Signboards indicating the direction to Waki Darbar (left) and Tajuddin's Court (right) in Waki Woods

main place where Baba Tajuddin sat and stayed in Waki Woods after he left this world.

Taj Darbar in Waki Shareef, present-day views

Baba Tajuddin's baggi (top left), another view of the tree (top right), and his jubba (left, boxed) preserved inside the Waki Shareef Taj Darbar

Baba Tajuddin's palang (covered) preserved inside the Waki Shareef Taj Darbar

The Sweet Neem Tree

When the sick man took a bite of a leaf from that tree, it was unexpectedly sweet, and he was no longer sick. Not only that, but he was no longer sick. He felt much better instantly.

Besides the *shifa khana* within Waki Shareef, Tajuddin arranged for another extraordinary healing spot in another area of Waki, where a neem tree stood. Its bark and leaves were originally bitter, as they usually are for neem trees, but this soon changed once Tajuddin was around. A sick man once came and told Tajuddin about his condition. He was instructed to eat from the leaves of this neem tree. He was instructed to "fetch the leaves and eat".

The man immediately thought he would not be able to do that because he knew that neem tree leaves were bitter. Sensing this thought, Tajuddin told him not to worry and assured him that everything around there was sweet. He remarked:

> *Who said its leaves are bitter? Wherever our sight goes, everything is sweet!*

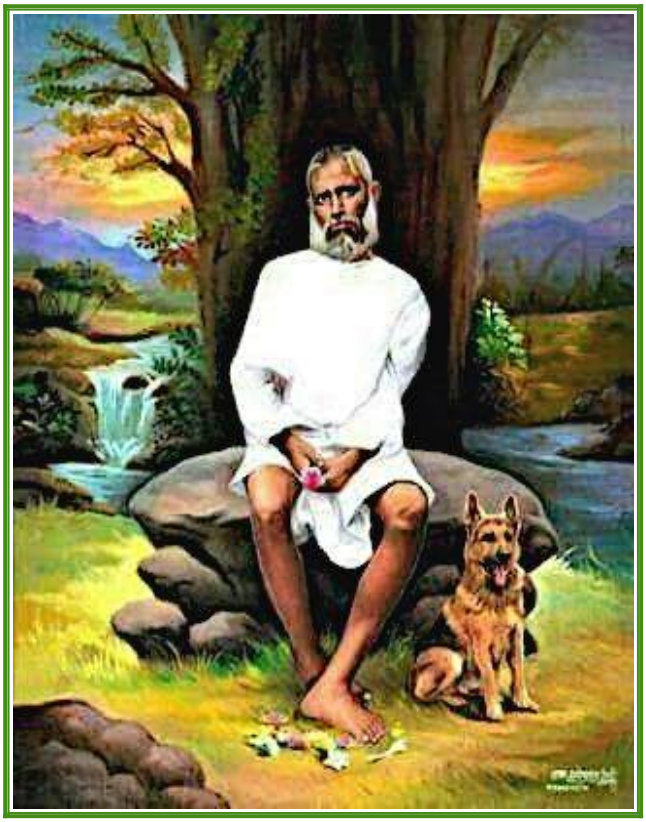
Indeed, when the sick man took a bite of a leaf from that tree, it was unexpectedly sweet. Not only that, but he was no longer sick. He felt much better instantly. From then on, it became known to others as well that the leaves of that particular neem tree are not bitter but sweet to taste. Many were cured by the same tree, which remains to this day.

Most sick patients, however, were directed to the *shifa khana*. Once, an Englishman frustrated by a long-term illness came to Waki to meet Tajuddin. He was so weak that he was barely able to walk. Tajuddin gave him dried bread and instructed him to dunk it in water, eat it, and remain at the healing centre. The Englishman did as told until he recovered completely. When his relatives came to see and pick him up, they were unable to recognise him due to his regained ability to walk normally again.

A present-day view of the Shifa/Dawaa Khaana

Sheru the Guide Dog

Sheru was given a duty to guide people coming to meet his master from the railway station. It instinctively knew when a guest had come from afar by train and would be present on the platform at the exact time of arrival.



While residing in Waki Shareef, Tajuddin came across a dog that had been lying dead for several days. He ordered for it to be put inside a covered basket. Moments later, the dog sprang to life and jumped out. The dog kept running in front of and alongside the master, who then declared, "*Ha ha, ab jaa, aaj se tera naam Sheru rakha* (Ha ha, you may go. From now on, your name will be Sheru)".

Sheru was given a duty to guide people coming to meet his master from the railway station. It instinctively knew when a guest had come from afar by train and would be present on the platform at the exact time of arrival, irrespective of its schedule. It would then take the guest to his master's residence or wherever else his master was at the time. It became so famous that people became accustomed to seeing it wait at the railway station and would advise newcomers to simply look out for Sheru. They knew its presence meant that some guest of Tajuddin was arriving and would see the guide dog directing them out of the station. The guests also praised Sheru's intelligence and alertness.

Although this was the norm for quite some time, and Sheru was no ordinary dog, its life was limited like that of any human being. One day, a gentleman, who knew about Sheru the guide dog guiding visitors to meet

the saint, arrived at the railway station. He expected Sheru to be there. However, Sheru was not there upon his arrival. The guest was still able to head for the saint's residence without the guide dog's aid but wondered why it did not come to the station. While the gentleman was going to meet the saint, along the way, he saw a dog dying on a pathway, so he stopped there. A few moments later, he saw Tajuddin coming his way. The man rushed towards him, greeted him respectfully, and told him about Sheru dying. Upon hearing this, Tajuddin said, "Now, let us go and see where it is".

After seeing his guide dog in the state it was in, Tajuddin told the man to put it in a basket and bring it along. Tajuddin covered it with his gown when it was inside. After walking some distance, the man noticed slight movements inside the basket. Sheru gained some strength and jumped out, but after walking a little, it appeared to be dying again. Tajuddin once again put his gown over it, but this time, he asked for Sheru to be buried near the lunatic asylum. Sheru's burial spot is marked. To this day, it is considered an effective spot for curing dog bites.

Sheru's burial spot, near the mental asylum

A Tiger's Supplication

"The tiger had been supplicating to God for twelve years for the privilege to lick the feet of a man of God. What you witnessed was the fulfilment of this dua."

A *mureed* of Tajuddin, named Yousuf Shah [see Ocean of Spiritual Grace], recalled that one night, he, along with another *mureed*, Abdur Rahman, accompanied their master deep into the woods. They stopped at a small mound of sand. Tajuddin laid down on it and told his two *mureeds* that he was going to rest for a while. It was not long before they heard their master snoring. The thought of being alone while their master was asleep startled them a little. Tigers were known to visit the area. The faint roars of tigers were slowly becoming more audible. They were too far inside the woods to find a way out, and it was not an option to leave their master alone either.

Soon, the roaring sound was loud enough to make it clear that a tiger was nearby and that it was coming towards them. When they saw it coming, they resorted to massaging their master's feet in an attempt to gently wake him up. They were petrified on one hand in case he did not awaken, but they also had strong faith in their master's ability to handle tigers. They knew that Tajuddin himself was as brave as a tiger. When the tiger came very close and crouched to lick his feet, Abdul Rahman shifted to massaging his head instead before quickly standing up. Yousuf Shah remained at his master's feet and was able to feel the tiger's warm breath without any fear.

The tiger then got up, turned around, and slowly walked away back into the darkness of the woods. By the time their master also got up, the tiger had gone. Abdul Rahman asked, "O Master! A tiger came while you were asleep. We were afraid. We are still trembling." Tajuddin reassured them that there was nothing to worry about. He told them, "The tiger had been supplicating to God for twelve years for the privilege to lick the feet of a man of God. What you witnessed was the fulfilment of this *dua*."

A Portal to Afghanistan

He would sit on a stone and be instantly teleported to a distant land. The site was a portal clouded in mystery, which he used to carry out secret missions. ...karamaat [were] performed there too.

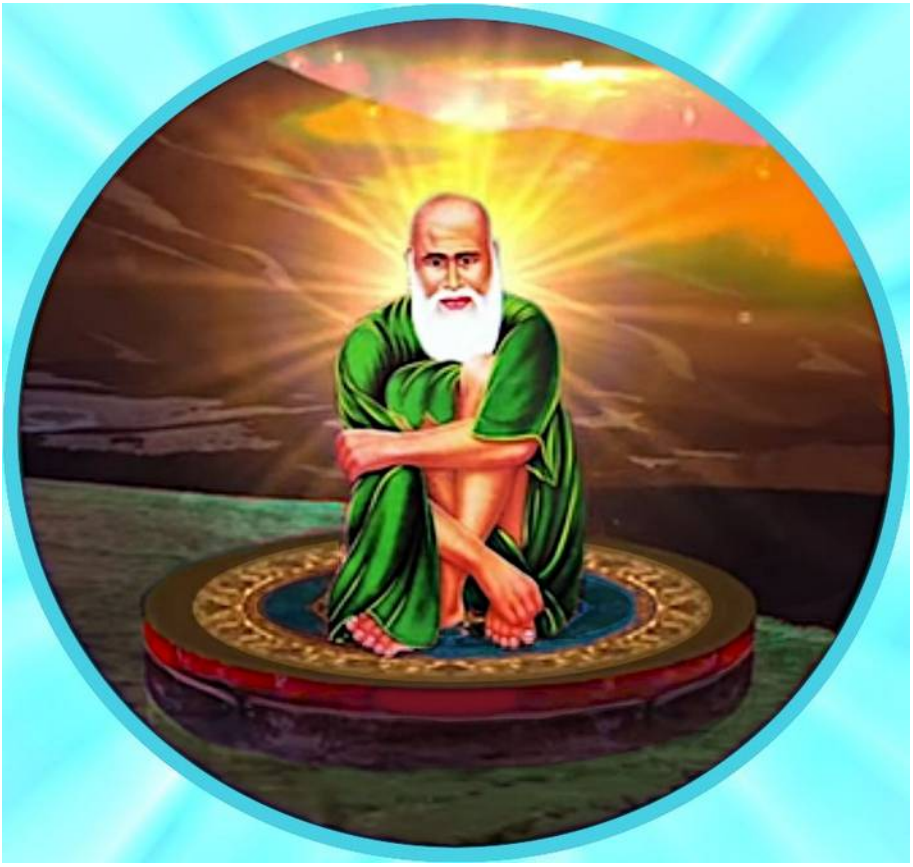
Kabul Kandhar

The rock (covered) on which Baba Tajuddin teleported to Afghanistan

A hill near Waki, on the opposite side of the Kanhan River, was a distant spot Tajuddin visited occasionally. He named it Kabul Kandhar for a very good reason, which was unusual for an Indian locality. He usually invited only his closest *mureeds* to accompany him there, and he would disappear and reappear on its crest. He would sit on a stone and be instantly teleported to a distant land. The site was a portal clouded in mystery. He used it to carry out secret missions. There were reports of the saint meeting with people there and of *karamaat* being performed there too.

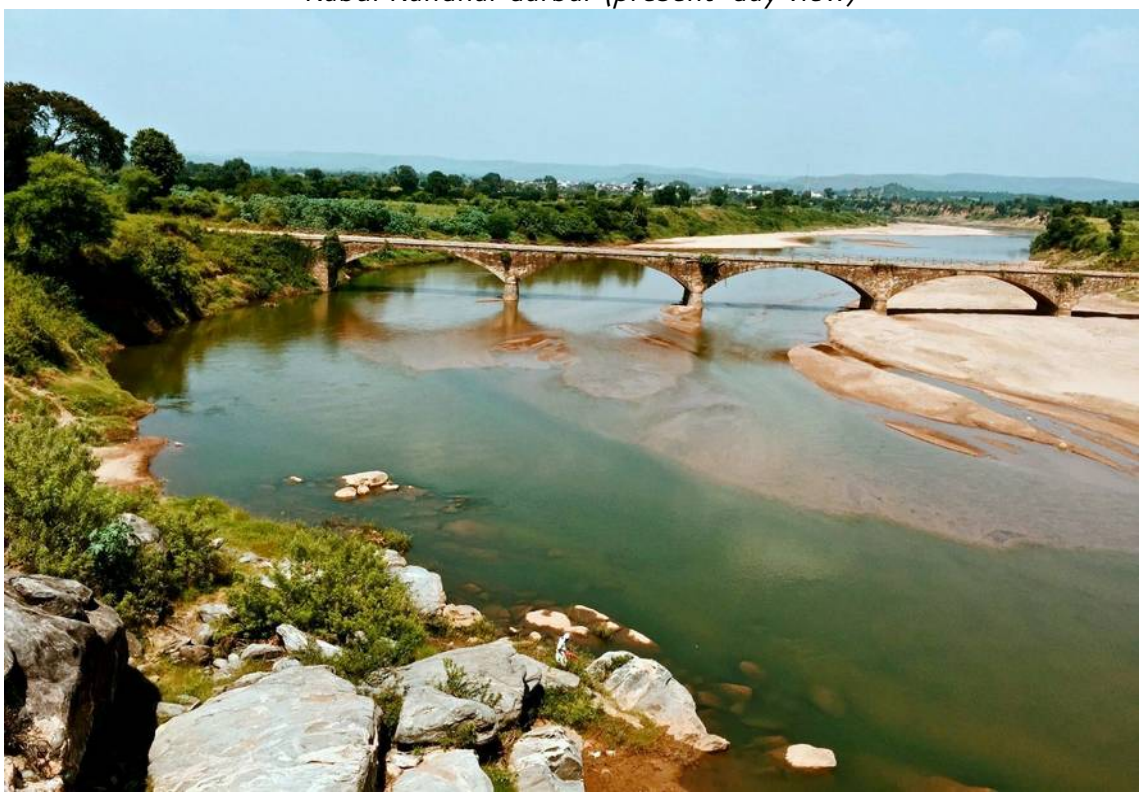
Once, while touring Maharaj Bagh in Nagpur, Tajuddin instructed his driver, Hera Lal Kochwan, to take him to Kabul Kandhar: "Go ahead to Kabul Kandhar (*barha re gaari Kabul Kandhar*)." No

sooner had he set off, Hera Lal recalled that the whole environment around him changed suddenly. They were no longer in Maharaj Bagh. He noticed they were travelling through a completely different and unfamiliar place. It was Afghanistan. After reaching a certain spot, his master alighted and went over to a tent. Seeing him coming, three men came out of the tent and paid homage to the saint. One of them was Hazrat Aeyn Allah Shah, whose shrine is at Anao Bharat. After conversing with them, Tajuddin returned to his *baggi* and was instructed to "move the carriage (*barha re gaari*)". As Hera Lal set off, the scenery changed back instantly to their more familiar sights of Nagpur.



There are similar known cases of Tajuddin teleporting himself to Madinah for 21 days of *imaamat*, and to the lands of the Usmanian Empire during its battles [see Turkey's Victory in War]. But another mysterious place, not as far, was on colourful rocks in the middle of the River Kanhan itself, en route to Kabul Kandhar. Tajuddin used to sit on them and recite the Holy Quran. The words would then be echoed by the river, creating a truly mystical ambience.

Kabul Kandhar darbar (present-day view)



The River Kanhan (near Ramakona) in the present times

Lunches in the Woods

Tajuddin used to go and stay in the wooded areas of Waki... He often had lunches in the woods... Tajuddin typically stayed in the woods for many days at a time... the inhabitants felt blessed...

When Tajuddin used to go and stay in the wooded areas of Waki, some *mureeds* would accompany him and take stocks of food and drink with them. He often had lunches in the woods, and sometimes, he specially requested companions to take food with them, but usually, people offered him food and tea en route before he reached the woods. So as not to dishearten anyone, Tajuddin ate at least a little of whatever everyone gave, and he would distribute the remaining portion among his devotees and others nearby. His favourite foods were rice, fish, lentils, and pulses, on which he devised the following lines of poetry:

Daal chaawal perr ka phool, Ye na khaaya to mitti dhool.

Lentils and rice sprout from plants, Worthless like soil, though, if you've never eaten them.

Once, Tajuddin happened to be eating *pulao* (steamed rice) voraciously when a certain Sayyad Murtaza Nawab began to have doubts in his mind because he never expected saints to enjoy delicacies. He did not say anything, but no sooner had this thought entered his mind than Tajuddin stopped eating the *pulao* and began chewing on pieces of stone lying nearby, as if they were *mithai*. Murtaza begged his master to forgive his weakness.

On another occasion, Tajuddin was not hungry when a man from Silsila Ashrafiya came to meet him. He asked the people what the saint liked to eat and was told it was fish and rice. He brought a fish, had it roasted, placed it in a tin, and presented it to Tajuddin, saying, "*Hazoor, ma machhli laya hoon, is ko qabool farmaye* (Please accept this fish that I have bought for you)". The master responded, "*Tajuddin zinda machhli nay khaata ji* (Tajuddin does not eat live fish)". The man insisted it was not alive and that it was freshly roasted, but when he opened the tin, he saw it had water and the fish was swimming inside.

Tajuddin typically stayed in the woods for many days at a time. Sometimes, he entered a village, and sometimes, he stayed deep in the woods far from any village. Wherever he decided to stay, the inhabitants felt blessed to have him among them for as long as they could. As per a rule in his presence, no *mureed* ever went back without first seeking permission or being instructed by the saint himself to return. Some would get permission immediately, whereas others would have to wait longer, up to a few weeks. Those who remained present in his company tolerated all the hardships of travelling and living outside, exposed to all the elements.

Empathy with Animals

Tajuddin enjoyed a strong mental connection with animals... he was able to sense what they needed, communicate with them, take care of them, and befriend them. The animals were also able to sense what the saint wanted.

Besides taking care of humans, Tajuddin also had empathy for and took care of animals. He connected with pigeons and horses when he was young [see No Absences to Explain]. He was able to sense if any animal was hungry or thirsty, and he healed and revived them, too, like he did human beings. Some would come specially to meet the saint. In fact, he would never harm even dangerous or poisonous animals. There were many of them in Waki Woods, including snakes and scorpions. About them, he would say: "They are creatures of the jungle; they will not harm you."

Hunger and thirst

Quite a few cases are known where Tajuddin was able to know when a particular animal was hungry or thirsty. One was when the Maharaja brought a hungry tiger into the palace at Sakardara, so Tajuddin released it to make his point [see A Hungry Tiger in the Palace].

Another case was when Tajuddin visited Dighori, a few miles away from Nagpur. Whenever he would be there, it was Abdullah Dakhani's duty to provide drinking water to all the visitors. He carried an earthen pot of water with him at all times. On this occasion, however, Tajuddin refused it and ordered Abdullah to take the pot over to a horse about a furlong away. He rushed to the horse and found that it was very thirsty, so much so that it took five pots to quench its thirst. Only a spiritual person could sense a thirsty horse nearby, and only when the horse had drunk first did Tajuddin and the other visitors drink water as well.

Healing and reviving

Once, Tajuddin's own aunt offered him tea, but he refused to take it. He told her to give it to a fox lying dead in the field. When she took it over and mentioned it was from Tajuddin, the fox sprang to life and licked up the tea before moving off. Other similar cases where he healed or revived dead animals included his own guide dog, Sheru [see Sheru the Guide Dog] and the dead calf of a devotee [see Kicked Back to Life].

One day, it was raining heavily in Waki Shareef, and Tajuddin was seen walking to and fro outside, followed by a large crowd around him. He went over to the roadside, led there by a puppy, who informed him that its mother had died. Tajuddin saw the bitch that had been lying dead for three days with other puppies around her. Someone was about to disperse its puppies, but Tajuddin stopped him, saying:

> *Na roko, aane do, muraade maangne aye han.*
>
> *Don't do that. Let them come and ask for what they want.*

Tajuddin responded to their barking, "*Haan haan, challo challo*" (yes, yes, let's go). He then approached the dead dog, touched her with his hands, and asked, "Why are you lying here? Get up and run." At these words, the dog sprang back to life and scurried away with its puppies. Other dogs in Nagpur also acknowledged Tajuddin's saintly status and greatness after this incident. It was evident by the way they gathered, listened to, and supported him from then on.

Animal guests

Tajuddin had a close relationship with snakes. This became apparent to the lunatic asylum staff one day, when they witnessed a big black cobra spread over him, twirling around his neck, while he was inside his cell [see Majestic and Cobra-Adorned]. One very old snake itself came especially to meet the saint at the palace [see The Long-Awaiting Visitor]. Other human guests had to wait from a safe distance while this visitor had its chance.

Tajuddin called tigers dogs and dogs tigers. It signified that even the tigers kept by ordinary people or kings are like dogs, whereas the dogs of saints are like tigers. A remarkable demonstration of empathy was with a tiger who came to meet the saint in Waki Woods [see A Tiger's Supplication and The Tiger in Waki Woods]. It was witnessed by only a few close and brave devotees, which included the young Muhammad Azeem. The empathy was mutual. The animals loved Tajuddin just as much as he loved them. This was again evident when a large flock of birds gathered during the saint's last moments on earth [see The Day of Separation].

A mutual connection

All these cases show that Tajuddin enjoyed a strong mental connection with animals. It explains how he was able to sense what they needed, communicate with them, take care of them, and befriend them. The animals were also able to sense what the saint wanted. For instance, it is known that his own horse, Bahadur, never had to be reined. It instinctively knew whenever its master wanted to either proceed or halt [see Trips on a Cart].

Reinstated by Khwaja Sahib

Naturally, he was glad to be reinstated, but he knew it was not the government that did this favour; rather, he was reinstated by Khwaja Sahib... Tajuddin looked at the man with a smile.

A government employee, Muhammad Hussain, was so distraught over his dismissal from service that he submitted many petitions to be reinstated. All his efforts were in vain, that is, until his petition was heard by Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti. This hearing came about in a dream while staying in Ajmer for a few days. He saw Khwaja Sahib proceeding somewhere along with some other holy personages.

Khwaja Sahib called the Hussain over and gave him the good news that he had been reinstated in his job. When the man returned to his native place, he was informed of the reinstatement notice he had received while he was away. Naturally, he was glad to be reinstated, but he knew it was not the government that did this favour; rather, he was reinstated by Khwaja Sahib.

Some days later, Hussain visited Waki and was in the company of Tajuddin to seek his blessings when Tajuddin said to him, “Gentleman, why have you come here? Did you not recognise the companions of Khwaja Sahib?”

This questioning made the man think after the initial surprise of how the saint knew about his dream, in which he received news of his reinstatement from Khwaja Sahib. The possibility then occurred to him that one of the companions must have been Tajuddin. As he was having this thought, Tajuddin looked at the man with a smile. It gave him reassurance that he was right. He then said, “Yes, we were also there when Khwaja Sahib accepted your petition and gave you the news of your reinstatement”.

Curative Glory

She had a dream there in which she was told to go to Nagpur, as the cure she sought was in the hands of Tajuddin... She was sure it was the saint who was going to heal her.

A married woman of an affluent background once visited Ajmer Shareef to beseech Khwaja Sahib to relieve her of her chronic ailment. She had a dream there in which she was told to go to Nagpur, as the cure she sought was in Tajuddin's hands. The woman accordingly left for Nagpur to meet this saint. She was prepared to do whatever she could to be cured and spared no effort in this matter.

On arriving at the palace in Sakardara, the lady was informed that Tajuddin was not present there and that she would find him in Waki instead. She was advised to wait inside for him to return, but since she was very eager to see him, she headed straight to Waki. Upon arriving in Waki, she went straight into the woods alone.

She had not gone very far when she saw the magnificent sight of someone coming towards her from the distance. She was sure it was the saint who was going to heal her. The atmosphere in the woods suddenly became much calmer and tranquil. It reassured her further. Although it was daytime, it was as if the sun had paled during a quiet evening around the time of dusk but without darkness. There was no sign of any animate life; there was no sound or movement at all. A weird and mystical kind of stillness pervaded as if the whole world around her had frozen in time.

The lady's sight was totally fixated on the saint in all his wonderful glory, coming closer. When Tajuddin stood before her, the halo around his head shone brightly, which dazzled her. Tajuddin picked up a stone and threw it in her direction. It did not touch her, but it broke the tranquillity and made her frightened and want to escape. Then Tajuddin held her shoulder, saying, "Mother, why are you afraid? I did not target you but the evil attached to you (*Amman, kyun darti ho, tujh ko nahi marta, balaon ko marta*)." It was done to ground her and make her aware of her surroundings while relieving her of her ailment, which was due to a jinn. She regained her composure at these words, and the chronic complaint that had made her life miserable for so long vanished miraculously.

Feeding without Fire and Fuel

When they lifted the lid of the cooking pot, they were amazed to see the food was thoroughly cooked, even without fire and fuel.

A fruit merchant named Abul Hassan once came to Waki with his father to fulfil his vow of feeding the poor by offering *niyaaz*. He was preparing to give food to those present in Tajuddin's company. While cooking in a spot reserved for this purpose, it unexpectedly started to rain heavily. The hearth could not withstand the downpour because it was open to the skies. The fire was extinguished instantly, and the firewood was soaked and soon floating in a puddle of rainwater. The man then arranged for another hearth in a safer place and was about to start cooking again once the short spell ended.

A part of the painting on the adaalat wall

Meanwhile, a convict appeared before the master, securely bound by hand and foot in chains and flanked by two police constables. As soon as he saw the saint, he burst out in tears and cried out, "O merciful master! They're going to hang me in two days. They brought me here because this was my last wish, which the court gladly granted. Please bless me so I may be released."

Tajuddin ordered Abul Hassan's father to take the man over and feed him with whatever had been cooked by now. No one dared tell their master that the rain had washed out the hearth and there was no food because the present one had only just been arranged. They silently took him over. When they lifted the lid of the cooking pot, they were amazed to see the food was thoroughly cooked, even without fire and fuel.

As their master instructed, they fed the man, as well as all the others gathered there. After he had eaten to his heart's content, the people asked him what the reason was for his sentence. He told them he was extremely enraged at the sight of one of his employees having an illicit relationship with his daughter, so he hacked him to death. On hearing this, Tajuddin directed him to appeal to a higher court and assured him he would be acquitted. The man did as he was advised and was duly acquitted. Then, he, too, gave *niyaaz* to feed the poor on another day.

A Pot of Gold Nuggets

When he instructed Kashinath to turn it upright, to his surprise, it was full of gold nuggets... the blessings of his presence, [was] worth much more than a pot of gold nuggets.

One day, some officials came to Dr. Kashinath's mansion in Waki and issued him a written warning. The doctor was well-off and was not short of anything, but uncontrollable circumstances once led to a mounting debt. Kashinath tried to deal with the situation at the door, but the officials could not be conciliated. They warned him his lands were at risk of confiscation if the matter was not resolved soon. Fortunately, his spiritual master was nearby in the woods at the time.

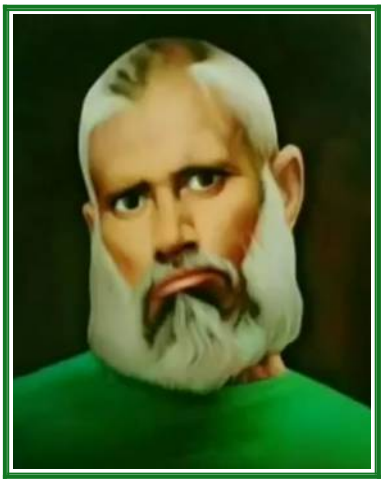
Tajuddin returned while the officials were still present. He asked what the matter was. Kashinath told him about the situation and their warning. He instructed Kashinath to bring a pot of water and to overturn it after Tajuddin had washed his hands with it. All the water fell onto the ground. When instructed to turn it upright, to Kashinath's surprise, it was full of gold nuggets. Tajuddin then turned to the officials and told them to take as much as was required to clear the debt. It took only three nuggets to do so.

When the officials left, who were themselves also surprised at what they witnessed and how the debt was cleared, Tajuddin spoke with Kashinath in confidence. He told him to keep the rest of the nuggets for himself. Kashinath fell at his master's feet and remarked, "What would I do with such nuggets when the one who made them is with me?"

Tajuddin then buried the rest of the nuggets in the ground by hand and said to Kashinath, "If the need ever arises, these nuggets will rise to the surface themselves". As it happened, Kashinath never needed to bring out those nuggets, nor did the desire ever arise to do so for any other reason. For him, the condition for using those nuggets was clear. Besides, the honour of hosting his spiritual mentor in Waki and the blessings of his presence were worth much more than a pot of gold nuggets.

Guidance for Living Well

He conveyed spiritual realities in ways that could be easily understood... the greater or main focus of the saint was on their deeper internal conditions... it was centred on self-purification.



In his capacity as a master of spirituality, Tajuddin counselled, guided, and mentored many people throughout his life. When he was older, he was respectfully called 'Baba Tajuddin', or simply 'Baba Sahib' or 'Babaji'. Whenever he needed to explain a spiritual reality, he spoke in allusions and used allegories. He conveyed them in ways that could be easily understood.

Outwardly, people would see sessions of chanting, spiritual exercises, and other formulas being read repeatedly, but the greater or main focus of the saint was on their deeper internal conditions. Baba Tajuddin gave individualised training to meet the needs of each spiritual aspirant. In all cases, it was centred on self-purification (*tazkiah-e-nafs*), whether he disclosed this intent clearly or not. His emphasis was always on strengthening one's relationship with God, regular remembrance of God through *zikr*, and demonstrating sincerity in everything said and done. He often advised:

Allah Allah karte, achha rahte.

Live well by doing Allah Allah.

By saying this, he pointed out that the spirit of faith is the connection with God. An inner circle of devotees led by Yousuf Shah Taji was tasked with the duty to teach "Allah Allah" to newcomers. Baba Tajuddin emphasised the need to establish a relationship with the Creator. He regarded the ritual prayer (*salah*) and the remembrance of God (*zikr*) as means

that lead to connecting with the source. Many devotees were transformed by this advice alone [see No Food but Tea and Vigils, and Saying Allah Allah].

What Babaji despised most was cruelty, greed, and malice, but he also admonished other disorderly conduct. In extreme cases, the master would advise to temporarily refrain from eating or talking. He was often accused by naive outsiders of going against the shariah, but he had deep insight into the very source of people's ailments, so he knew how best to guide them. If he had to point out any defect, he would usually do so in a way that would achieve the desired effect in a subtle way and without exposing that defect to others. He pointed out deficiencies not only in observed actions but also in people's thoughts and feelings.

Sometimes, Baba Tajuddin guided pious-looking people in shocking ways. For instance, he once ordered an old man to be struck with a shoe [see Five Strikes of a Shoe]. It appeared to others as a punishment, but the strikes were symbolic. He also guided the self-righteous [see The Doubting Maulvi and Emphasis on Righteous Actions].

No Food but Tea and Vigils

> After ninety days of complying with this instruction, Amjad was bestowed with spiritual blessings. ...[His] heart of faith became activated while in his master's presence.

Qazi Sayyad Amjad Ali Shah worked for the Nagpur railway company and was introduced to Baba Tajuddin at the age of 28 by his workmate Subhan. In their very first meeting, Baba Tajuddin asked him to stay behind for 15 days. When permitted to return to work after this lapse, he found that he never missed a single day. He served Baba Tajuddin, and whenever he returned to his workplace, which took half an hour to reach, it was continued without any missing days. Like he did himself, Baba Tajuddin made him able to bilocate as well.

Babaji instructed Amjad Ali in a dream to visit again. He welcomed him at the station, gave him a *namaz* book and some coins, arranged his marriage, and declared himself as his spiritual father. Later, after several years of being unable to bear children, Babaji appeared in his wife Khairun Nisa's dream and gave her a drink and a rose, and so a child was born.

As per his routine, Amjad Ali paid respects to his master Baba Tajuddin, but one day, he was told: "So much eating! From today on, there will be no more food for you. However, you may keep drinking black tea." So when he returned to his tent, he asked his wife to make tea, and he kept drinking nothing but tea all day.

In the evening of that day, Amjad did not go to meet Babaji as he usually did out of fear. However, he appeared before the master in the morning. When he paid homage, he was told, "I pointed out that you are eating too much. When did I say to drink tea all day? Just three cups of black tea per day is enough. Don't eat or drink anything else apart from this." His exact words were:

Ek waqt kaali chai peete, achhe rahte.

It would be better if you drink only one cup of black tea at a time.

Qazi Amjad Ali

After ninety days of complying with this instruction, Amjad was bestowed with spiritual blessings. However, a friend who knew Amjad had not eaten for many days invited him to dinner and prepared a *haleem* dish for him. Amjad gladly accepted the invitation and enjoyed the *haleem*. Although he did not eat excessively, he was worried that 24 hours had passed without having heard anything from his spiritual master. It turned out that it was only a short period of feeling dissociated, as things were back to normal the following day.

Baba Tajuddin also advised people to "sleep little". Amjad Ali adopted his master's practise of nightly vigils (*shabb-e-bedari*). By virtue of his closeness to his spiritual guide, Amjad Ali was also fortunate to possess the key to his master's chest, in which some personal items were stored.

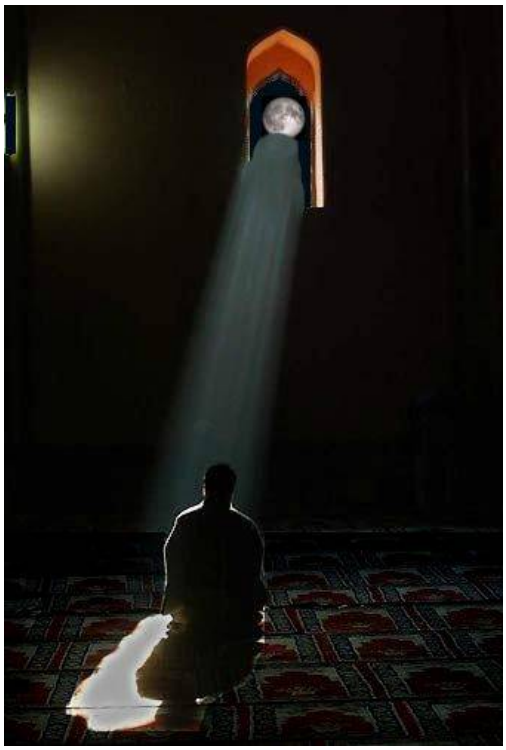
Quranic Recitation and Wird

> After ninety days of complying with this instruction, Amjad was bestowed with spiritual blessings. ...[His] heart of faith became activated while in his master's presence.

Baba Tajddin's nocturnal devotional exercises were so absorbing that his recitation of the Holy Quran would often make him unconscious. Disciples would be given certain passages to recite based on how much *wird* (constant repetition) they could handle. Usually, they were verses from Surah Falaq, Nas, Masad, Inshirah, Duhaa, Shams, Fath, Yusuf, Ya Sin, Muzammil, and Surah Rahman.

One day in 1901, as Amjad Ali recalled, he was told to "read the book (*kitab parho*)". As he began to read Surah Muzammil, his master joined in the reading in an ecstatic state and said:

> *Hazrat tum bhi parha karo, ham bhi parthe han, barri kitab parthe. Allah Allah karte, achhe rahte.*
>
> *You all read along, too, like how we read the big book [Quran]. By doing 'Allah Allah' [being mindful of God], all will be well.*



Amjad Ali became drowsy during one of his nightly vigils while reading this surah. At that point, Babaji held his head, shook it gently, and said, "How are you reading it? Is something striking you?" Others were also given *durood shareef* to read. On another occasion, Amjad's heart of faith (*qalb*) became activated while in his master's presence, and the heartbeats of both resonated in synchronicity. It happened by Babaji's grace. Amjad Ali passed away while doing *wird* after migrating to Karachi in 1947 [see Instructions to Migrate].

Sparked to Read the Quran

"Tajuddin has said to read the Quran." ...Something sparked inside him. He was sure that was the moment when he must have been instantly given the ability to read.

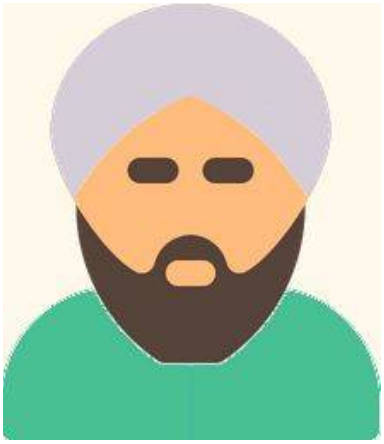
Baba Tajddin would often say, "*Hoji Babu, Allah Allah karte, achhe rahte* (Now then, all will be well by doing Allah Allah)". By saying so, he guided many people to be constantly mindful of God. He also frequently emphasised the importance of reading God's book for guidance, namely the Holy Quran. Not wanting anyone to miss out on the blessings, he once conferred the ability to read the Quran to an elderly man who was unable to read before he came to Baba Tajuddin.

Although a Muslim and religiously inclined, the man in question did not know how to read the Quran. He was unable to because, although he had the desire, he never had the opportunity to learn to read it in his life. When he came to meet Baba Tajuddin, the master asked him to read the book. The man replied that he could not read as he was unlettered. He admitted that he had never read the Quran. This time, Babaji ordered him more sternly, "*Nana mian, jao ji, Quran parho* (Dear grandfather, go and read the Quran)". The man repeated the same, saying that he did not know how to read. Babaji then said, "*Keh dia na Tajuddin ne ke Quran parho* (Tajuddin has said to read the Quran)". So, the man decided to go over to a *Hafiz* sitting nearby to attempt to read the Quran. The *Hafiz* told him to read. The man had no difficulty in trying at all and found, to his own surprise, that he was able to read after all.

When asked by the people why he said he was unable to read, he insisted what he said earlier about himself was true. He was indeed unable to read before coming because he had never learnt to do so. He added that it was only when Baba Tajuddin said, "*Keh dia na Tajuddin ne...*", that something sparked inside him. He was sure that was the moment when he must have been instantly given the ability to read. By the grace of the Siraj as-Salikeen, Baba Tajuddin, the man went on to become a teacher of the Holy Quran. Though not instantly, as he himself was conferred the ability to read, he was able to make his students learn to read quickly and also to memorize the entire Quran in a short span of time, within a few months at most.

The Doubting Maulvi

All doubts of the maulvi were dissolved... He beheld Babaji in the heavens performing the prayer in a state of celestial magnificence.



One day, a *maulvi* came with his friend to Sakardara to meet Baba Tajuddin, though not for any particular reason. When they arrived, they sat under a tree and waited. While waiting, the thought arose that he should check to see if the Baba was truly a saint because he did not appear to have read *salah*. Baba Tajuddin was only a short distance away when the doubting *maulvi* had this thought in his mind. He immediately came over and addressed the *maulvi*: "O Hazrat! So you think we are crazy charlatans?"

Babaji placed a part of his *kurta* on his head and removed it a moment later, whereupon all doubts of the *maulvi* were dissolved and changed to convictions. Babaji then said, "*Hoji Babu, ham to aise hi ha* (Now then, this is how we are)". The *maulvi* instantly fell at the saint's feet and begged for forgiveness. When the people around saw what he was doing and that Babaji had left, they asked the *maulvi* what happened. He told them about the thought he had just had and then explained that when Baba Tajuddin placed his *kurta* on his head, he beheld the master in the heavens performing the prayer in a state of celestial magnificence.

The reality was that Baba Tajuddin frequently stressed the importance of performing the prayer, especially to his Muslim disciples. When people came to meet him at a prayer time, he would tell them to pray first before meeting him. He never left a single prayer himself, although his manner of praying once in a while seemed unconventional to those unfamiliar with his enjoyment of God's nearness [see Praying as God Instructs]. Also, his status was such that he could perform it without anyone knowing, even while simultaneously engaged in worldly duties or spiritual ones. He equally emphasised the other pillars of Islam. The same was the case for *hajj* and *umrah* pilgrimages because time and distance posed no barriers for the magnificent Taj-ul-Muluk, Baba Tajuddin.

Emphasis on Righteous Actions

> The important thing for all his servants was righteous action alongside belief... it is these people who will receive glad tidings.

It was usual for Baba Tajuddin to instruct everyone to pray and remember God whenever the *azaan* was given. A reminder was sometimes necessary, as when a *mawlana* from Karachi went straight inside while a prayer was in progress and didn't bother to join. Even a few residents of Sakardara refrained from joining the congregation for the *maghrib* prayer one evening. They believed their spiritual master's presence was sufficient for their salvation. When this group came to pay respects the following day, Babaji turned in their direction in a *jalaali* state and reminded them about the importance of righteous action:

> *Tajuddin koi chirriya ha jo urjaata? Nai ji Babu. Pehle namaz parhte, phir Tajuddin ke paas aate.*
>
> *Is Tajuddin a bird that can fly? Don't be misled. Read namaz first before coming to Tajuddin.*

A time then came when a special team of volunteers had to be formed for this task. On another occasion, a group of people came to Dighori to present *mithai* to Baba Tajuddin in anticipation of something they desired. Before they could present it, however, they decided to eat the *mithai* among themselves and donate some money instead. They knew if they gave him the *mithai*, he would distribute them to those gathered there anyway. When this group came forward to pay their respects, Baba Tajuddin reminded them of a Quranic verse relating to accountability in the hereafter. After listening to it, they felt ashamed of what they did.

He also reminded people that saints were themselves servants of God, and the important thing for all his servants was righteous action alongside belief. He quoted those verses in which doing good deeds is mentioned together with believing because it is these people who will receive glad tidings, as in the following verse:

> *Wa bashsharilladheena aamanu wa 'amilussaalihaati...*
>
> *And give glad tidings to those who believe and do righteous deeds... [Quran, 2:25]*

Darshan for Sadhus and a Ewer

When Bahadur went to meet the three sadhus, they were not present in their respective places... The master stood at the main gate of the palace, and one of the three sadhus was with him.

Like a river that provides a source of water to all the lands it passes through, both fertile and barren, without discrimination, Baba Tajuddin helped people of all kinds. Everyone benefited from his kindness, favours, and blessings, from outcasts to the nobility, including spiritual seekers of other religions.

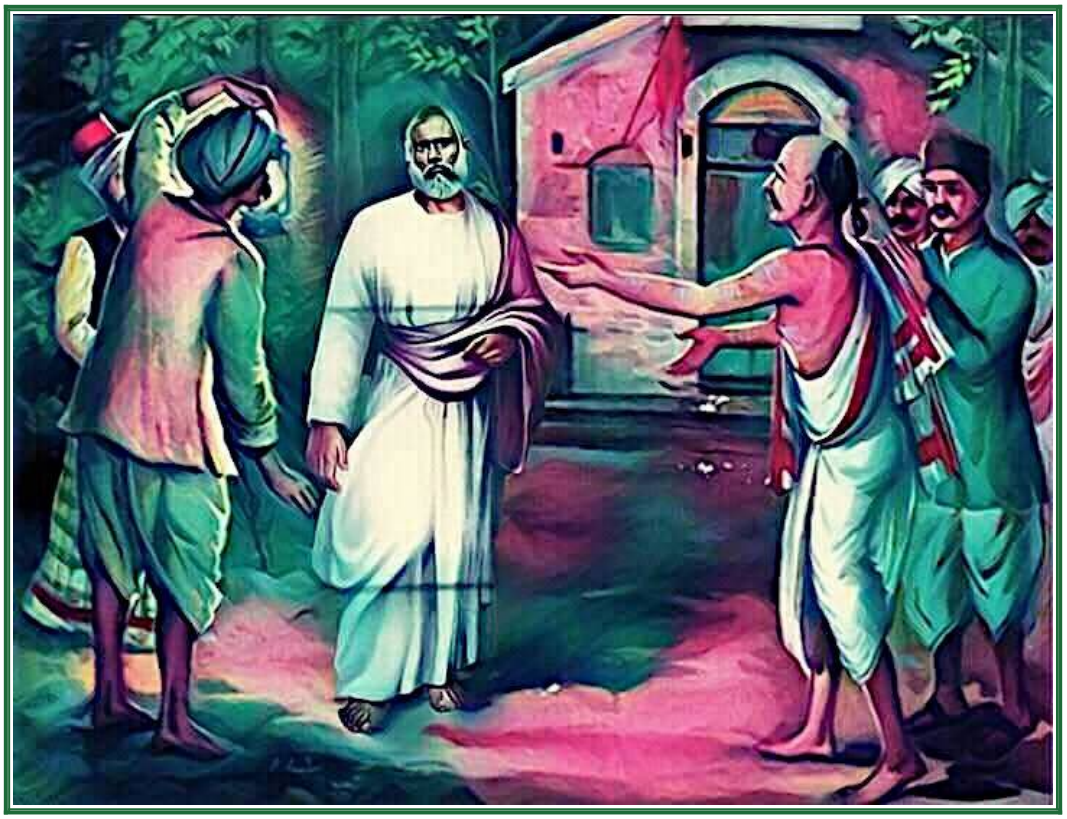
A Hindu man named Bahadur Prasad Tewari, who was the son of a rich merchant, was talking with a *sadhu* in Sagar one day when they started to discuss Baba Tajuddin and his spiritual powers. The *sadhu* reproved Bahadur for admiring and becoming a devotee of a Muslim saint when, as he said, "There are no less among us Hindus as well".

Bahadur recommended the *sadhu* at least meet Baba Tajuddin in person. When the *sadhu* eventually agreed, Bahadur's brother, a *hakeem* posted in Nagpur as Deputy Commissioner, took them to meet Baba Tajuddin in Sakardara. At that time, Baba Tajuddin was inside the palace, but while they were waiting outside anxiously to meet him, suddenly, they found themselves standing in a place where there was neither a palace nor an ashram anymore. Instead, they had a *darshan* (vision) of Shankarji, then Krishna on the bank of the river, and a succession of other holy people, culminating in the Hindu Sufi Ramchandraji within the span of a moment.

Then, all of a sudden, they found themselves back outside the palace. Once again, they were standing in the same crowd, waiting to greet Baba Tajuddin as he came out. Bahadur and the *sadhu* could not control themselves emotionally and fell at Baba Tajuddin's feet as soon as he

came near. Only they knew what had transpired, as others around them didn't.

A little later, three other sectarian *sadhus* who happened to be nearby also expressed negative opinions of Baba Tajuddin, which Bahadur overheard. Bahadur wished they too could be shown the greatness of his spiritual master to dispel their hatred. When Bahadur returned to his residence after meeting his master, he fell asleep and saw him again in a dream. Baba Tajuddin came to his house, woke him up, and sat down. Bahadur asked his wife to make tea for his master, as they were blessed by the saint's presence in their house. After Baba Tajuddin drank the tea, he said, "Come with me. I will take you on a tour."



When Bahadur was outside with Baba Tajuddin, the master asked him to call those other three *sadhus*, so he invited them to come along, and they came. Baba Tajuddin walked ahead, the three *sadhus* behind him, and Bahadur behind them all. Within a fraction of a second, all of them reached Banaras. After touring Banarus, they visited more holy places in Gaya and Prayag, followed by Jagannath.

Hindu holy sites in Banarus (left) and Jagannath (right)

In Jagannath, when they walked through a bazaar, one *sadhu* asked Bahadur to buy a ewer for him as a reminder of their visit to Jagannath. The shopkeeper asked for 3 or 4 rupees, but after requesting a reasonable price, Bahadur bought the ewer for 2-8-9 rupees and gave it to the *sadhu*. The three returned after their tour.

Sometime later, when Bahadur went to meet the three *sadhus*, they were not present in their respective places. He then departed for Sakardara to meet Baba Tajuddin. The master stood at the main gate of the palace, and one of the three *sadhus* was with him, carrying the ewer that he had requested Bahadur to buy for him while in Jagannath. Seeing the ewer made Bahadur wonder whether the tour with Baba Tajuddin and the three *sadhus* was in the awakened state or a dream. So he asked the *sadhu* why he was there and from where he got the jug.

The *sadhu* smiled and said to Bahadur, "You have forgotten so soon. This is the ewer that you bought in Jagannath and gave to me. Now, I'm also in Baba Tajuddin's presence so that I can gain salvation through him."

Bahadur was taken aback when he heard these words from the *sadhu's* mouth. He stepped forward onto the palace grounds, and Baba Tajuddin said to him, "O son of a merchant, the price you paid of two rupees, 8 *aanas* and 9 *paisas* is much for the price of the ewer".

Upon hearing these words from Baba Tajuddin, Bahadur became even more astounded. He fell instantly at his master's feet.

Half a Banana from a Faqeer

He took the banana hesitantly and had second thoughts after eating it from the hands of a Muslim faqeer, who had eaten part of it first. Very soon, however, a state of istighraq overcame the sadhu, and he began experiencing spiritual ecstasy.

A *sadhu*, who was the spiritual guide of the Maharaja of Karoli and tahsildar Durga Parsad, was known to be a devotee of Baba Tajuddin himself. He kept a photo of the Muslim saint in his book. He also made it clear that since Baba Tajuddin instructed him to say "Allah, Allah", he was neither an idolator nor a polytheist. Furthermore, he recalled that this came about after passing his examination when he was appointed as a *tahsildar* in Nagpur.

While staying in Napgur, his wife, whom he loved dearly, was dying. It was a great shock for him, especially as people were putting pressure on him to remarry. He did not entertain the idea initially, but later, he started mentally preparing for the possibility as he considered doing so would be reasonable. Despite this suggestion of pundits, he was still unsatisfied with the situation. At the time, Baba Tajuddin's name was prominent on the lips of many, but he did not think well of Hindus who visited Muslim *faqeers*. However, eventually, he decided that it might be worth going into his presence, and if he did, he would not tell anyone. Besides, by visiting Baba Tajuddin, he would know whether he is truly a pious person or not.

When the *sadhu* resolved to meet Baba Tajuddin, he took a basket of bananas with him. While in the master's presence, Babaji said to him, "Come on, *Tahsildar Sahib*, Tajuddin has no wife either. What did you do with your marriage?"

After hearing these words from Baba Tajuddin, the *sadhu* peeled a banana and offered it to him. After eating half of it, Baba Tajuddin gave it back to the *sadhu* to eat the rest. Since the *sadhu* belonged to

the Brahmin caste, he took the banana hesitantly and had second thoughts after eating it from the hands of a Muslim *faqeer*, who had eaten part of it first. Very soon, however, a state of *istighraq* overcame the *sadhu*, and he began experiencing spiritual ecstasy.

When his family heard the news of his condition, the *sadhu* was still absorbed. They tried to agitate him to make him return to his normal state, but their efforts were in vain. They took him away by holding him firmly. Some time passed, but the *sadhu* remained unaware of the world and those around him, so they chained him. Then, they took him back to where this condition had taken hold of him, despite objections raised by other members of his community. The Hindus did not consider it befitting for a Brahmin to go to a Muslim *faqeer*. However, since they were helpless in this matter, they eventually agreed with the decision made by his family.

When the *sadhu* was brought once more into Baba Tajuddin's presence, Babaji ordered them to release him from the chain and assured them he was in control. The *sadhu* recovered instantly and became aware of everything that was going on. Baba Tajuddin then said to him, "You remain a *tahsildar*".

The people informed Baba Tajuddin that, due to his madness for several days and having missed going to the office, his appointment as a *tahsildaar* was terminated. It was then that Baba Tajuddin gave the *sadhu* the instruction to spend his time saying "Allah, Allah". He wrote this instruction on a piece of paper with his own hand and gave it to him. Baba Tajuddin also told him that the *tahsildaar* would carry his shoes, and so it happened that, besides the Maharaja of Karoli, *tahsildaar* Durga Parsad would carry their master's shoes as a matter of respect and honour. Their *sadhu* himself abandoned idolatry and polytheism in favour of busying himself with saying "Allah, Allah", and was devoted to the spiritual master, Baba Tajuddin of Nagpur.

Five Strikes of a Shoe

He waited to be struck by a shoe five times... He told them: "What I was unable to achieve during my whole life, I was able to receive within the span of a short moment thanks to Baba Tajuddin."

One day, an old man with great knowledge came to meet Baba Tajuddin. When he arrived, he presented himself at his service. Baba Sahib was sitting in the company of his devotees at the time. To their surprise, their master told them to strike the man with a shoe five times. The learned man prepared himself by bending over and folding his hands in order to have Baba Tajuddin's command fulfilled. He waited to be struck by a shoe five times.

One servant then got up with a shoe and struck the man's back softly five times, not knowing why he was asked to do what he was doing. It was a strange sight for others present there as well. They, too, wondered why their master had ordered for a man, known to be learned, to be struck in this way. When the five strikes were over, they asked him, "Why did this happen to you? What was this all about?" They expected him to either be upset or express remorse for some wrongdoing. Instead, they saw him feeling relieved and grateful, as if a burden had been lifted or when one receives glad tidings. He told them: "What I was unable to achieve during my whole life, I was able to receive within the span of a short moment thanks to Baba Tajuddin."

There was another similar incident in which Baba Tajuddin used shoes as a remedy. It was not to give a blessing but to deal with a case of possession. Two men from Hangat Ghat once came to Baba Tajuddin. They brought a new pair of shoes with them, as instructed. When they arrived, Baba Tajuddin wore the shoes for a short while, then took them off, and he threw one toward one man and the other toward the second man. Both men were troubled by jinns. By hitting them with spiritually charged shoes, the jinns were dispelled, and the men were finally relieved of the troublesome spirits.

The Healing Water

The water proved immensely healing. He had been blessed... When he realised his water was no longer effective or even clean,... he gave some guidance along with the blessing.

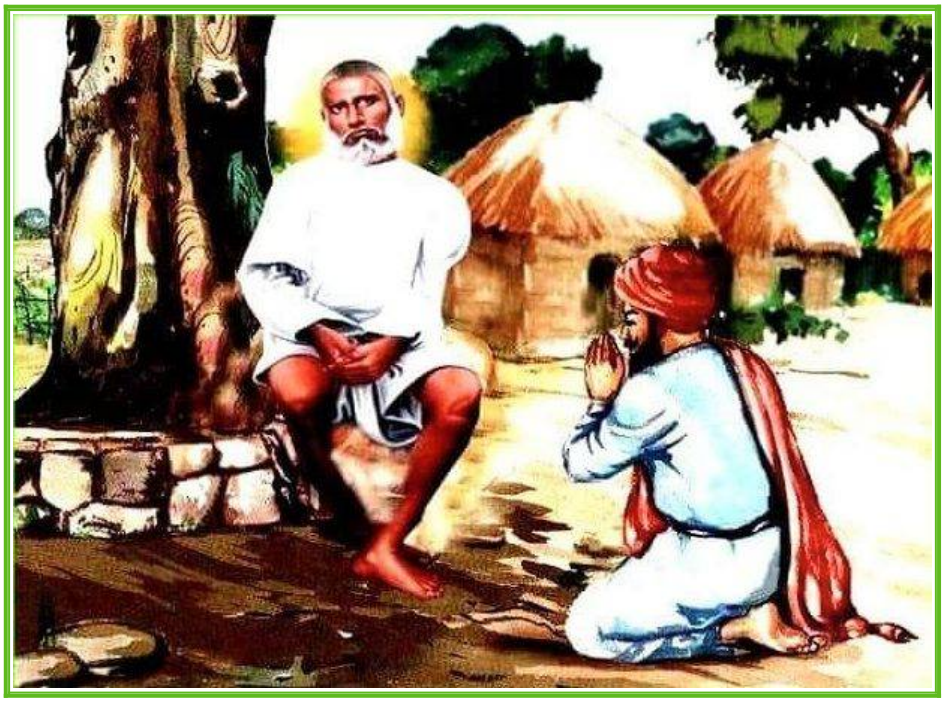
One day, an old man named Abdul Samad from Bhikpur Jaisi came to meet Tajuddin in Kamptee, wishing to be blessed. He was 110 years old but appeared to be around 75. Tajuddin gave him a *beedi* to smoke after first smoking a little himself and assigned him the duty of giving drinking water to patients. He told him, "*Paani me ungli dubaate, mareez ko dete, mareez shifa paate*" (Dip your finger in the water and give it to the patient to get healed). The *beedi* activated some cognitive capacities in him, and the water proved immensely healing. He had been blessed. Soon, so many people started coming to him from afar that he became famous, and officials had to make special arrangements for his visitors. Tajuddin then sent him to other cities, and his fame reached as far as Europe, from where people also came.

Some years later, while Baba Tajuddin was residing at the palace, a lady brought her child to Abdul Samad in the hope of having him cured like others she had seen. Abdul Samad ordered her to leave because he considered her unclean when he found out psychically that she was in her menses. She went away but was extremely despondent. He had broken her heart. Her last hope now was to go directly to the spiritual master, Baba Tajuddin. The previous experience was still fresh in her mind, so she sat quietly under a Molseri tree nearby when she reached it. She hesitated to approach the saint, fearing that she would be rejected again, but at the same time, she was very worried about her son's life.

Baba Tajuddin knew full well what happened. He sent someone to invite the lady sitting under a Molseri tree inside. When she entered, she stood at a distance

as a precaution to ensure she would not put the saint off in any way. However, his dealings with her were totally contrary to her preconceptions. He said, “Come nearer, mother! That Abdul Samad, with the metal jug of water, is merely a pool that has become polluted. You’ve now come to the ocean.”

With more confidence than before, the lady paid her respects to the saint. Baba Tajuddin instructed her to return to her home, assuring her that her child was well and that she would find him playing. So she returned happily this time, expecting all of this to be true, which it was. Back in the palace, Baba Tajuddin raised his finger and remotely suspended Abdul Samad’s power. When he realised his water was no longer effective or even clean, he came straight over to his master. He suspected what the reason might be, so he begged for forgiveness.



Baba Tajuddin kept his healing ability suspended for some time before restoring it. This time, however, he gave some guidance along with the blessing. His words were:

Tajuddin apne zamaane ka samandar ha jo kabhi gandha nahi hota.

Tajuddin is an ocean of this era that never gets polluted.

The lesson in this was that if Allah grants power to someone, they should not abuse it, boast about it, develop pride, or refuse someone to benefit from it. Rather, the purpose is to dispense the blessings of health and well-being to God’s creation. In short, the point was that the granting of a spiritual power comes with certain responsibilities.

A Glistening and Sparkling Body

> Babaji's body shone in the water... It made him appear to glisten and sparkle brightly in flashes of white light... [Hisamuddin] concluded that Babaji had approved of his becoming a mureed.

After hearing about Baba Tajuddin's fame, Hisamuddin resolved to become his *mureed*. That night, when he made this decision, he saw Baba Tajuddin in a dream making ablution beside a tank of crystal-clear water. It had a strange reflective property like a shiny mirror. Babaji's body shone in the water when he dipped his feet for the final part. It illuminated every spot and made him appear to glisten and sparkle brightly in flashes of white light.

Baba Tajuddin then turned his attention to Hisamuddin while standing in the water. He invited Hisamuddin to join him in making an ablution. The water made him glisten, too, wherever it touched his body. Babaji then stretched out his right hand toward Hisamuddin, who gladly held it with both his hands. At this point, he awakened from the dream, contemplated its significance, and concluded that Babaji had approved of his becoming a *mureed*. He determined it was appropriate to go and meet him physically to present himself at his service.

Hisamuddin applied for leave from his office and set off to meet Baba Tajuddin in Nagpur in person to become his *mureed*. When the saint's carriage arrived in Sakardara, a large crowd started gathering around him, as it usually did. Since Hisamuddin was younger than most others there, he was able to run faster to reach the carriage. When he reached it

and expressed his wish to Babaji, he was told, “Gentleman, why are you running to meet me? Was holding my hands last night not sufficient?”

A sign of verification

Khwaja Nizami

Hisamuddin was surprised yet overjoyed at these words. He was almost ready to give a pledge of initiation but remained cautious. That moment, he made another request, this time silently: “Now that you have accepted me as your *mureed*, give me a sign to verify it.” Baba Tajuddin turned to him directly and said, “You want evidence? Very well. That will be given by Khwaja Hassan Nizami. Go to him.”

Baba Sahib thus referred Hisamuddin to Khwaja Nizami to give him a pledge of initiation instead. Khwaja Hassan Nizami (1878-1955) was a saint in Delhi and the chief clerk (*gaddi nasheen)* of Khwaja Nizamuddin Chishti (1238-1325). Hisamuddin was surprised to know the connection between Baba Tajuddin and Khwaja Nizami, but another doubt then arose in his mind.

One final test

Hisamuddin wondered whether Khwaja Sahib was equally a perfect saint, so he immediately thought of testing him, too. He wrote a letter to Khwaja Nizami in a deliberately ambiguous tone without giving his address or signing it. In the letter, he simply wrote, “I am ordered to become your *mureed*. Let me know when I should come to you.”

After some days, Hisamuddin received a reply from Khwaja Nizami: “Hisamuddin, come here in accordance with Baba Tajuddin’s order. Hazrat Nizamuddin’s monthly festival is on the 17th of every month. Come and take the vow on that day.”

Hisamuddin went to the *dargah* (lodging) in Delhi as instructed. Upon arriving, Khwaja Nizami called him over before he got a chance to introduce himself. He said to Hisamuddin, “So you have come. Be ready to take the pledge of initiation tomorrow morning.”

The next day, Hisamuddin decided that no more testing or verification was necessary. He went over to Khwaja Nizami as directed by Baba Tajuddin, sat down before him, and became his *mureed* by giving a pledge of initiation.

The Divided Roti

He divided the roti into two halves, and gave one to each of the two... He then made the point clearer: "Give the rightful owner his due, Don't take what is not yours!"

One day, a certain *nawab* (governor) came to seek blessings from Baba Tajuddin following his success in a litigation case involving 18 lakh worth of property. It was a huge amount at the time. He wanted the whole case resolved in his favour so that he could keep the entire property. Babaji led him in his carriage over to a *harijan* (a low-caste Hindu), who was eating *rotis* (chappatis) at that moment. The *rotis* were wrapped in an old cloth on his head. As Babaji alighted from his carriage, the harijan rose to pay homage.

Baba Tajuddin then took one *roti* from the harijan, sat down under a tamarind tree, and told the *nawab* and the *harijan* to join him. He divided the *roti* into two halves and gave one to each of the two. He then said to the *nawab*: "*Adhi adhi roti khaate, achhe rahte, poori khaate to hagne lagte* (You will remain well by eating only half; otherwise, you won't be able to digest it)".

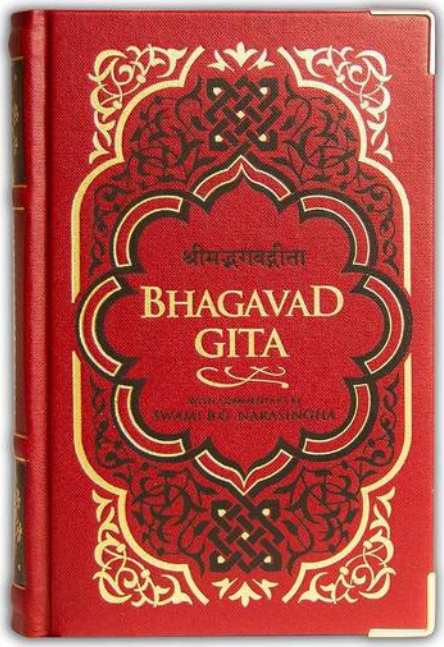
The *nawab* failed to grasp what was being hinted at. Baba Tajuddin then asked for the legal document and a *beedi*. He kept burning the *beedi* on the document. He then made the point clearer: "*Haqdaar ko uska haqq dete ji, lo, Tajuddin ne apna mohr bhi laga diya* (Give the rightful owner his due, Don't take what is not yours! There you are, I've put a seal on it now)".

The property did not belong entirely to the *nawab*, despite being close to winning the case. The *nawab* now understood, however, that the property had to be divided like the saint divided the *roti*. He took the advice seriously. He took only half of the property and gave the other half to its rightful owner. In this way, he only kept what rightfully belonged to him and avoided the problems that would have occurred had he not heeded the saint's advice.

In the Bhagavad-Gita

Baba Tajuddin's approach was to help people strengthen their existing faith and thereby help them realise God. He blessed people of all religions, irrespective of their status or caste.

A person by the name of Hanumantha Rao once came to Baba Tajuddin to devote himself to the saint. It was when he noticed that many *harijans* were benefiting from rendering *seva* to the Muslim saint. He wanted to avail himself of the chance to be graced by a man of God. Although he worked in the secretariat, due to their low caste, the *harijans* otherwise had little opportunity to make progress in society. He was even prepared to become a Muslim if he had to. However, he had strong faith in the Bhagavad Gita and wanted to remain a Hindu while at the same time being somehow devoted to a Muslim saint.



When Hanumantha came into Baba Tajuddin's presence, Babaji told him to show the copy of his holy book, which he had with him. Baba Tajuddin glanced through it and pointed out some passages that referred to saints while saying, "Look, we are in this!"

Hanumantha understood what the Muslim saint was telling him. He was thrilled because it reassured him that it was fine to be a Hindu and to follow a man of God of a different faith. The important thing was to gain the truth, demonstrate *bhakti* (devotion to God), and attain spiritual perfection, which is what is symbolised in the Bhagavad Gita. Although becoming a Muslim has its own benefits, Baba Tajuddin never compelled anyone to change their faith. Rather, his approach was to help people strengthen their existing faith and thereby help them realise God. He blessed people of all religions, irrespective of their status or caste. Hanumantha's new-found devotion to the Muslim saint changed his spiritual life for the better.

In Search of a Guide

He desperately needed a saint to guide his inner journey... Abdul Aziz paid homage and gladly made the request himself to be initiated, which Babaji accepted... His search for a guide was finally over.

A man named Abdul Aziz was once in search of a *murshid* (spiritual guide). It was a time in his life when he desperately needed a saint to guide his inner journey. Some holy men tried to make him their *mureed*, but he did not feel satisfied and did not submit to them. One day, he saw a saint in his dream. When he described his dream to a close friend, he was told the description fit that of Baba Tajuddin of Nagpur. The friend recounted some of his *karamaat* that took place while he was confined at a lunatic asylum and told him he had recently been freed and would now be found in Waki.

Hearing all this made Abdul Aziz yearn to meet the saint he saw in his dream. When he arrived in Waki, he saw the same saint he had seen in his dream sitting under a tree. On seeing the saint seeker, Baba Tajuddin picked up a blade of grass from the ground, used it to inscribe his name on his own lap, and smiled at him. Abdul Aziz wondered how the saint knew his name but understood it would be within his ability as a saint, so he moved forward and smiled back.

Unlike the other holy men he had come across, Baba Tajuddin did not say anything at all to suggest he wanted to make him his *mureed*. This matter was left entirely to his discretion, but by appearing in his dream and inscribing his name on his own lap in front of him, he expressed his worthiness of becoming his *mureed*. Abdul Aziz was quick to understand the true status of the saint he was in the presence of. He paid homage and gladly made the request himself to be initiated, which Babaji accepted. He thereby became his spiritual child, and his search for a guide was finally over.

This manner of finding a guide was immensely satisfying for Abdul Aziz. It developed spontaneous faith and trust in him for Baba Tajuddin, which grew stronger over time. This was tested one day, however, as true

mureeds are. Although his search for a guide was over, the trials had only just begun.

Trials and heights of discipleship

The way Baba Tajuddin dealt with his *mureeds* varied greatly, so much so that sometimes he would be seen treating them kindly and lovingly, and at other times, he would appear to be harsh, nasty, and sometimes even beat them. Even in these cases, despite the harshness of his attitude and behaviour, a mysterious radiance would glow around his head, and Baba Tajuddin himself remained calm and in control. The *mureeds* close to him knew it was always a blessing and that there was some or other reason why different people had to be treated differently. For Abdul Aziz, it was something he still needed to understand in his early days with his spiritual master.

When Abdul Aziz witnessed one such incident in which his master was angry and scolded a visitor, he thought it was the right moment to express his own displeasure. Usually, in such a state of *jalaal*, when he would not calm down so easily, they would bring Maryam Bibi over, but on this occasion, not only did he not calm down, but he scolded her too for trying to intervene. The thought that Abdul Aziz had to say something about this situation barely arose when Baba Tajuddin turned his attention to him. Baba Tajuddin himself was waiting for this moment to teach him a lesson too. By now, Babaji was visibly calm. He took hold of his mureed's hand and reminded him:

> *Indeed, those who pledge allegiance to you are actually pledging allegiance to God, as the hand of God is over their hands. [Quran, 48:10]*

He added further:

> *It will be there in the days to see. The one who takes the pledge is also a mureed himself. The hand of this shaykh being over yours is also benign.*

When Abdul Aziz understood this point and his faith in his master was consolidated, it was then that his discipleship had reached its proper stage. Baba Tajuddin renamed him Nasiruddin (Helper of the Faith). He stayed in his master's presence for a long time and reached great heights on the path of spirituality, so much so that a time came when others in search of a guide were guided in his direction.

From the Hills of Afghanistan

Baba Tajuddin responded to his desire while he was wandering in the hills of Afghanistan, and now the beacon of spiritual knowledge and wisdom was right before him in Waki.

An old man named Jan Shah was wandering in the hills of Afghanistan with the desire to find the light and know the ultimate realities. His wanderings led him to go on a pilgrimage to Makkah. There, he met Saidin, a green-robed saint whose face was radiant. He asked him where he was from because he spoke with a foreign accent. Saidin told him, "Not from here. Come to Waki, near Nagpur, which is famous for its oranges. There, you will find what you are seeking to know."

Before Jan Shah could enquire any further about where Nagpur is, the saint vanished. Jan Shah was left wondering who he really was, but he was certain he had found the guiding light he had been desperately seeking. The saint's words left such a strong impression that he was determined to go to Waki to gain the knowledge he sought. After completing the pilgrimage, Jan Shah set off immediately to Waki to find what he was after.

Having reached Nagpur, Jan Shah's own foreign accent made it difficult to find Waki. He was even told there was no such place, but he never gave up hope of reaching the light. When he became perplexed due to conflicting information, Ahmad Khan of Nawab Porah, a devotee of Baba Tajuddin,

spotted him wandering about, trying to find some place. When Jan Shah told him about his quest and the guidance to come to Waki given during the pilgrimage, Ahmad Khan took him straight away to his spiritual master. Meanwhile, Baba Tajuddin informed the devotees present around him that "A *haji* is coming to meet (*chalo, ek haji mulakat ko arahe han*)".

Upon arrival, Jan Shah recognised Baba Tajuddin immediately. From then on, he no longer needed to wander through lands in search of the light to gain knowledge of realities. Baba Tajuddin responded to his desire while he was wandering in the hills of Afghanistan, and now the beacon of spiritual knowledge and wisdom was right before him in Waki. Jan Shah became a *mureed* there and then and remained in Sakaradara to serve his master for the rest of his life.

Once, Baba Tajuddin was in an ecstatic mood and appeared to be scolding his guests vehemently. Jan Shah found this awkward, so he asked his master, "Babaji, why do you scold them like this?" Baba Tajuddin did not object to this question. He replied lovingly:

> *Actually, I do not scold them, though it may appear to be like that. Some are blessed softly, while others have to be blessed harshly.*

Drawn to Nagpur

Hussain then had another lucid dream while he was still ill, in which he saw light rays coming towards him from a holy man's eyes... It was the same familiar face he had seen in his dream.

A government employee in Madras named Muhammad Hussain was seemingly an ordinary person. He was leading a normal life and earning 150 rupees monthly. However, it all changed once, as he was privileged to have been among those who were healed and specifically called over from afar by Baba Tajudidin himself. It started with a dream.

Hussain once had a lucid dream in which he saw himself in Madinah Shareef. He felt elated upon awakening in the morning. A few days later, he was spending time in Calcutta with his friends to enjoy life. While returning to Madras, however, he suddenly fell ill. His condition deteriorated from that day on, and no treatment was having a positive effect.

Hussain then had another lucid dream while he was still ill, in which he saw light rays coming towards him from a holy man's eyes. Spontaneously, he began to repeat 'As-Samad', one of the names of God meaning 'The Eternal'. This made him feel much better. He soon recovered and was able to go about his normal duties again. However, he remained curious about who the old man was, as he was sure he was actually present, and he was healed him it was no ordinary dream. He remembered the old man's face very well.

Hussain enquired about the old man by describing his face to some people who had some knowledge of spiritual matters. It did not take long before someone recognised him. Hussain was now sure that he had been describing Baba Tajuddin of Nagpur, so he decided to go there.

After arriving in Nagpur and being told that Baba Tajuddin was in Waki at the time, Hussain went straight to Waki. He greeted Baba Tajuddin, whom he had never met physically before. It was the same familiar face he had seen in his dream. What happened next is unknown, but what is known for sure is that Hussain was drawn to Nagpur for some special reason.

The Ending of a Mannat

Baba Sahib instructed Qasim to sit next to a fire he had lit and to stay awake all night... A glowing figure then appeared and came closer... with a face glowing with white light.

A man named Qasim Ali hailed from Akula but was once staying in Amravati. Like how Baba Tajuddin once enticed Muhammad Hussain to come to Waki from Madras [see Drawn to Nagpur], he did the same to Qasim Ali. When Qasim arrived in Wai, Baba Sahib kept him close as a privileged disciple.

Some days later, Baba Sahib instructed Qasim to sit next to a fire he had lit and to stay awake all night. A few other disciples also participated in the night vigil and accompanied Qasim near the fire. They spent their time reading and remembering God.

Around 1am in the night, Baba Sahib came out of his room and called a Hindu man to bring a lantern, which he did. Baba Sahib told him to light it. Then, Baba Sahib took the lantern and began to shake it. While doing so, a misty wind appeared, and everyone heard something from the nearby hill, like the thumping of shoes.

A glowing figure then appeared and came closer. It looked like an old man in a white robe with a face glowing with white light. Baba Sahib spoke with the mysterious entity and disappeared. All the disciples watched while being stunned. No one knew who that entity was and why their master was talking with and went with him.

In the early morning, Baba Sahib came back and instructed his disciples to have Qasim Ali's hair cut because they were too long. He kept them long because of a *mannat* (vow) given by his father when he had no child before Qasim was born. It was thought that the man in white was the Sufi saint in whose name the *mannat* was given, as he wanted Qasim to look normal like other men without his extra long hair. In this way, he ended the vow of Qasim's father.

The Same Baba from Delhi

He was dressed in the very same garb he had worn in Delhi some days ago. That baba was the great Baba Tajuddin of Nagpur.

A spiritual personage by the name of Zahurali Shah was walking in old Delhi one day, going towards a saint's shrine, when he noticed a baba sitting under a tree, smoking a *hukka*. He continued walking and did not think much of what he had seen. He then noticed a man approaching him from behind who halted exactly when he did. It made him turn around to see who it was.

The man following Zahurali was the same man he had seen earlier sitting under a tree. He seemed like a holy personality, so Zahurali greeted him, and the two of them started talking. The baba accompanied him to the tomb. Zahurali wondered if he was in the presence of a saint, so he asked to know who he was. The baba introduced himself as a resident of Nagpur and Waki and invited Zahurali to visit him sometime. As Zahurali was thinking about the whereabouts of Nagpur, and before he reached the shrine, the mysterious baba disappeared. He was surprised as to where the baba had gone. He looked around, but he was nowhere to be seen. He even waited for a long time, but he did not see him again that day.

Zahurali's curiosity made him visit Nagpur another day to visit living saints there, and lo and behold, he saw the very same baba sitting under a tree. Not only that, but he was dressed in the very same garb he had worn in Delhi some days ago. That baba was the great Baba Tajuddin of Nagpur. Whereas many people would come to meet the saint themselves, only a few individuals were invited by Baba Tajuddin himself. Zahurali was one of the lucky ones among them.

A Glimpse of the Beloved

When he looked intently at Baba Tajuddin, he was sure he was his beloved... Babaji appeared to him with full grace and charm... Baba Tajuddin graced and honoured the man. Many secrets and mysteries were disclosed to him in a matter of seconds.

In the city of Ajmer Shareef, there lived a man who was often absorbed and intoxicated in the divine. As he did not pay much attention to food, people would offer him food instead. Sometimes, he had to be fed forcibly by having the food pushed down his throat in small amounts. The *majzoob* was in this condition because he had been graced and honoured by Baba Tajuddin, but few knew his background.

The man had trained to be a barrister in London and was planning to practise law in Bombay. He went to a bazaar to acquire furniture and other things necessary to set up an office. It was while making arrangements to transport these things that he noticed someone watching him in an open window in the building opposite to where he stood. He only caught a short glimpse of the person. Then the window was closed, but he kept looking. He just stood there looking at the window from morning until evening. He was no longer in his senses and started to feel ecstatic as if looking at his beloved.

When evening came, a funeral procession was passing by. He realised that he would not be able to see his beloved again, as the funeral was of the one who was watching through the window in the morning. His world had been destroyed. He joined the procession all the way to the graveyard in great sadness and disappointment. His heart was broken.

When everyone at the graveyard had departed after burying the body, he was alone and began weeping in a loud voice. The weeping did not stop till a long time had passed; the sun had long set, and he saw that it was pitch black in the night. A passerby came over to console him. He advised the man to go to Nagpur and seek Baba Tajuddin. He was so impressed by what the passerby told him about Baba Tajuddin that he desired to visit Nagpur at the earliest.

When the man reached Nagpur the following day, he found Baba Tajuddin sitting on a podium at the palace of Sakardara. When he looked

intently at Baba Tajuddin, he was sure he was his beloved, but he could not reconcile this with knowing that the person he saw through the window had died and that he was present during his burial. Nonetheless, he kept looking at his beloved, this time in full satisfaction that his beloved was before him in full view. Babaji appeared to him with full grace and charm. Soon, however, he was unable to control himself, and in an intoxicated state, he ran towards his beloved's feet.

In a moment of delight and while totally absorbed in the divine, Baba Tajuddin graced and honoured the man. Many secrets and mysteries were disclosed to him in a matter of seconds. When he regained consciousness, Baba Tajuddin told him, "Go and do *khidmat* (be of service to others) in Ajmer Shareef, as it has been allocated to you. You will continue to see your beloved there and revel in a *mast* state (of divine intoxication). All will be well."

Ajmer Sharif dargah of Khwaja Gharib Nawaz

The Obsessed Female Yogi

Mai Noori's obsession led to establishing a spiritual connection with the 13th-century saint... She gained immense blessings, visible from her luminous countenance.

A newly converted Muslim, an elderly lady named Mai Noor Muhammadi but called Mai Noori, who hailed from Karachi, served at the shrine of Hazrat Bu Ali Shah Qalandar in Panipat. She remained there for 14 years and was so infatuated with the saint that she willingly left her Hindu family and other relations and converted to Islam. She belonged to a family of yogis, so she was naturally inclined to spirituality from a young age and familiar with different spiritual systems and practices. However, her heart was set on Bu Ali Shah Qalandar.

Mai Noori's obsession led to establishing a spiritual connection with the 13th-century saint, who was renowned for deep spirituality and serving humanity. She started seeing him in her dreams and became accustomed to seeing her cherished master this way. A time then came when she resolved to see him in the waking state as her obsession grew further. She strongly desired to see Bu Ali Shah Qalandar in person with her physical senses.

She eventually got a direct response to her concern in another dream one night because her desire was genuine. Bu Ali Shah Qalandar told her that if she wished to see him, she should go to Nagpur and visit him in the form of Baba Tajuddin. So, Mai Noor set off for Nagpur. Baba Tajuddin alerted his disciples, telling them, "*Chalo re, hamaari jogan aarahi ha* (Well then, our yogi lady is coming)".

Baba Sahib waited for Mai Noori close to the railway station because she was a special guest. She recognised him instantly and paid respect. Baba Sahib arranged for her stay, and she joined the spiritual gatherings and participated in their activities. Mai Noori gained immense blessings, visible from her luminous countenance, including the *darshan* she had been eagerly waiting for. After a period of stay and spiritual advancement, Mai Noori left and joined the Naqshbandi Sufi Order. She was incredibly dedicated to her new spiritual guide and, after passing away, was buried near Abdullah Shah Ghazi in Karachi.

A Sceptic No More

She was not only well but completely cured of the disease. From then on, he was a sceptic no more. He no longer harboured any doubts... about the miraculous healing powers of Baba Tajuddin.

A resident of Hyderabad was a firm sceptic of Baba Tajuddin. He did not believe any of the *karamaat* people claimed he performed. He totally disbelieved all that he heard about this personage residing in Nagpur. All this changed, however, when he was forced to deal with a desperate situation that made him pray for a *karaamat*. The scepticism did not lessen the saint's ability nor diminish his willingness to help. It made no difference. The disbelief was soon challenged and changed to relief, making the once sceptic eagerly recount his own first-hand experience of a *karaamat* of the magnanimous saint.

The man's sister was critically ill in hospital. All hope of recovery was lost because she was in the final stage of an incurable disease. Expert doctors had diagnosed that she was on the verge of dying and was expected to expire at any moment. Having heard about the healing powers of Baba Tajuddin, there was nothing to be lost from visiting the healer in Nagpur in case he could do something. He knew this was probably going to be his last chance. He had exhausted all other avenues available to him. When he finally resolved to go for his sister's sake, he set off with an inkling of hope, and a desire to be proved wrong in regard to what he used to think of the Nagpur saint.

When he arrived, the man's demeanour changed from that of a sceptic to one in a state of anticipation. He went over and cried profusely at the saint's feet. He pleaded with the saint to restore his sister's health but added, "If you are a true saint..." Baba Tajuddin only instructed him to go straight to his sister immediately. He thought it perhaps meant to be with her in her last moments. When he reached the hospital, he was dumbfounded to see that she was not only well but completely cured of the disease. From then on, he was a sceptic no more. He no longer harboured any doubts whatsoever about the miraculous healing powers of Baba Tajuddin of Nagpur.

Confined in a Circular Trap

He was referring to their focus on the outer world, making them confined in a circular trap... Baba Tajuddin's advice was not to remain confined in such a limited boundary but to expand and spread oneself... to come like a pauper rather than a king.

A *maulvi* once came to meet Baba Tajuddin in Nagpur. He was a learned scholar who was proud of his knowledge and status but was also a little intrigued by those who followed what seemed a more charming but unnecessary path of religious devotion in Islam. He thought that he had mastered all that was needed to be done to follow Islam to the letter and was confident of his ability to perform all the required and routine duties precisely. Although intrigued by Sufism, he was sure that it was superfluous or non-essential to succeeding in this life and the hereafter.

The mindset of this man was typical of many other *maulvi's* as well. Upon seeing him, Baba Tajuddin said, "*Nakkoji, ulamaa koloo ke bel* (Not again; such are scholars like the bulls that power grinders)". The bull he described is a type of bull, usually with two long horns, used to continuously turn something round, such as for oil extraction or a large flour mill. These bulls always remain within a fixed circular locus in continuous motion. They also trample anyone or anything that comes their way. The bulls on a merry-go-round fit the same description, being trapped in the amusement of the world. By these words, he did not mean to denigrate religious scholars; rather, he was referring to their focus on the outer world, making them confined in a circular trap. The analogy was that so-called learned scholars tend to be worldly-oriented and always remain within a certain boundary.

Baba Tajuddin's advice was not to remain confined within such a limited boundary but to expand and spread oneself. He also admonished the practice of considering oneself learned and boasting about it, as it leads to pride. In such situations, where overly proud people visited Baba Tajuddin, he advised them to come like a pauper rather than a king.

O Tajuddin!

[A mawlana who] rejected all claims of karamaat... found that he would say and recite things and impulsively add "O Tajuddin!"... All was restored as soon as the born-again mawlana complied.

A religious scholar once came to Nagpur from Chanda, whose name was Mawlana Qazi Nur Ahmad. Although from the ahle-hadith sect, he interacted with Sunni scholars but rejected all claims of *karamaat*. In fact, he mocked at hearing any accounts of supernatural happenings and denied their possibility outright, backed with textual evidence as per his own understanding. He hesitated to meet Baba Tajuddin, but his scholarly friends eventually convinced him to at least pay a visit to see for himself and check the veracity of such claims. They told him to feel free to test the saint if he so wanted.

The *mawlana* stood at a distance upon arriving at the Sakardara palace along with his friends. His opinion only strengthened further after observing the purported saint's attire and behaviour, and he derided the claims of people considering him to be a saint. He also objected to his not covering his head and ankles. He told his friends he would prefer not to go any closer. He was adamant that the so-called saint must be a charlatan. He had had enough. So, the friends proceeded without him.

The *mawlana* noticed the gathering getting larger and some people using the ashes under his feet as antimony. He considered it all insane, that all the people falling for him had lost their minds. Sensing the man's thoughts, Baba Tajuddin said to those around him, "*Hatjao ji Babu* (Get aside)". He went straight over to the *mawlana*. In an instant, the man's 'slate of knowledge' was cleaned as soon as Babaji reached the guest, who suddenly felt a little unwell. His friends took him away and left Nagpur.

Earlier, the once *mawlana* considered others to be lacking in knowledge and out of their minds, but now he was unable to recollect knowledge of any worth himself. He could no longer make sense of any book or lecture. The erasure was so deep that he even forgot how to read Surah Fatihah. His friends thought that it was because he must have thought badly about Baba Tajuddin. He concurred that perhaps it was so. After

discussing this situation, they agreed to go to Baba Tajuddin again, and this time, the *mawlana* would apologize for doubting his sainthood.

The group barely reached the gate of the palace grounds when the *mawlana* ran towards Baba Tajuddin. The spiritual master placed his hand on his chest, and his knowledge was suddenly restored in a more rectified condition than before, but not his intellect entirely just yet. When the born-again *mawlana* returned to Chanda, he found that he would say and recite things and impulsively add "Ya Tajuddin (O Tajuddin!)" at the end. Whatever he said, the listeners would not need to guess what he was going to append. He always finished by appealing to the saint whom he previously ridiculed.

He also wrote "Tajuddin, the light of God" on a large flag and on cloth wrapped around his upper arms as a *taweez* (amulet). This greatly irritated his congregation, who remained staunchly against all so-called saints. They considered their teacher's abnormal behaviour as a *biddat* (innovation) and *shirk* (association). Even his Sunni friends were bemused while also amused and happy by his transformation, seeing him change for the better.

However, the amusement subsided after a few days, and his friends, family, and others who knew him became more concerned for his mental well-being. So, to have his intellect and senses restored, his friends took him along and paid another visit to Sakardara, arriving early one morning. At seeing the same man again, Baba Tajuddin got in a *jalaali* state and said, "*Nai ji, jhanda utaar dete, taweez khol dete, aur namaz waese hi parhte jaese nana ki shariat kehti ha warna haddi tor deta hoon* (Now then, remove the flag, open the amulet, and perform the ritual prayer as per the shariah; otherwise, I will have to break your bones this time)".

All was restored as soon as the born-again *mawlana* complied by taking the flag and amulet off. The only changes that remained were his newfound discovery of the reality of saints, his belief in their *karamaat*, and the way he interpreted texts and judged others. Whereas he set out to disprove such miracles and expose the saint when first coming to Nagpur, it was now the opposite based on his personal experience. His next mission was to convey this knowledge and understanding and justify his new position to his family and congregation back home.

The Returned Watch

> He got out, grabbed the watch from his hand, and threw it away. The man thought he was mad for doing that... [He] saw the very same watch, to his amazement, on the table in front of him.

An ahle-hadith man in Raipur once borrowed a watch from a friend because he wanted to keep track of time during a visit to Nagpur. He had heard of Baba Tajuddin and his miracles and was determined to prove that he was a charlatan. He promised to return the watch after getting back.

When the man arrived in Nagpur, he found Baba Tajuddin sitting in his *baggi* at the time. He got out, grabbed the watch from his hand, and threw it away. The man thought he was mad for doing that. He searched hard but couldn't find the watch anywhere. Consequently, he was unable to return the watch to his friend after returning to Raipur. He left the matter of whether Baba Tajuddin was a real saint because he was worried about being unable to return the watch. He didn't tell his friend about it and tried to avoid him for a few days.

Finally, however, he admitted that he ran after the so-called saint in Nagpur, who threw his watch away. He said in his mind that he must have been a madman, whereupon he heard a voice from somewhere, "*Paagal kis ko bola re?* (So who are you calling mad?)". He turned around to see who spoke, but there was no one there. He was stunned. He then heard the same voice again, "*Le re teri ghari* (Take your watch)".

He looked around and saw the very same watch, to his amazement, on the table in front of him. The watch that went missing in Nagpur was thus suddenly manifested in Raipur. Baba Tajuddin continued, "*Lakhon ko dekhta hoon re* (I see hundreds of thousands)". The matter of whether Baba Tajuddin was a charlatan was also settled. Not only that, but it was also not necessary for the man to have said what he thought out loudly by tongue. He immediately returned the watch to his friend, told him everything that happened in more detail, and never doubted Baba Tajuddin's miraculous abilities or sanity again.

Rebuking the Tainted

Some were considered as seriously tainted and were, therefore, prime candidates for being rebuked and rectified by the Chiraghuddin and Tajul-Awliya Baba Tajuddin, [who] laid great stress on morality and one's role in society.

Among those who came to meet Baba Tajuddin were miscreants who dared to present themselves before him in spite of knowing that they were guilty of some wrongdoing or crime. Some were considered as seriously tainted and were, therefore, prime candidates for being rebuked and rectified by the Chiraghuddin and Tajul-Awliya Baba Tajuddin. Occasionally, the saint had to resort to extreme measures to deal with such visitors because he laid great stress on morality and one's role in society. A few did not realise what they had done wrong until he made it obvious to them. So, in some cases, he rectified them in no uncertain terms, while in others, he did so suggestively and gradually.

The earnings of some tainted people were marred by corrupt financial practices, such as charging usury and taking bribes. Baba Sahib rebuked them to let them know he strongly disapproved of how they were acquiring their livelihoods. They included a usury charger, who had to be beaten with a stick, a bribe taker from whom he refused to eat nuts [see The Reason for Refusing Nuts], and a revenue officer, who also took many bribes yet never hesitated to give all his wealth away for a certain goal [see Enamoured by an English Lady]. There were also those who sought easy ways of acquiring wealth [see An Easy Way to Earn and The Formula for Making Gold]. Their commonality was worldly desires, which are like a corpse or filth, hence their futility [see Renouncing Worldly Desires].

Another category of the tainted were those with superiority complexes [see Guidance is a Favour of God], those steeped in pride [see Plenty of Soap to Wash Everyone and Confined in a Circular Trap], and those having an inflated ego [see Singing without Ego]. Baba Tajuddin also dealt with disrespectful and malicious people who detested saints [see Disruption of a Zikr Gathering]. Yet another category was of those with uncontrollable anger and lust [see The Arab Guest] and debased persons [see The World as a Scorpion].

The Reason for Refusing Nuts

Babaji did not even so much as touch them... He then realised the reason for the master's refusal to take the nuts from him... because the saint knew they were purchased with ill-gotten money.

Once, Farida Ram, a businessman who was charging usury in the Waki area, came to visit Baba Tajuddin. Babaji had a stick ready in his hand at the time, and he used it to beat the man on the spot. He then told him, "You are a very cruel man because you have hurt many people". He advised him strongly to stop taking interest on the loans he was giving because unlawful earnings diminish spiritual power. This had a great effect on Farida. He promptly left his usury-based business and dedicated himself to the saint's *seva* for the rest of his life.

Another similar case is that of Abdul Rahman from Kotwal in Nagpur. One day, he brought some nuts and presented them to Baba Tajuddin at the Sakardara palace. Babaji did not even so much as touch them. Immediately thereafter, a poor man presented Babaji with *joaar rotis* (millet chappatis). As soon as he offered them, Babaji took out the *rotis* heartily and said, "Come, let us eat".

Abdul Rahman wished Baba Tajuddin would also accept his nuts. When this thought arose, Babaji turned to him and said, "I can't digest it", and, pushing the packet aside, added:

> *Hoji Babaju, Tauddin jawaar ki roti khaata, haraam ka rizq nahi khaata. Haraam ki kamai se deen aur duniya barbaad hojaati ji hazrat."*
>
> *There you go, Tajuddin much prefers to eat millet chappatis rather than take sustenance from ill-earned money that destroys lives and faiths.*

He then realised the reason for the master's refusal to take the nuts from him, although he was surprised because he never mentioned how he earned money. It was because the saint knew they were purchased with ill-gotten money that was taken from someone as a bribe rather than by legitimate means through honest labour. He apologised and left.

Enamoured by an English Lady

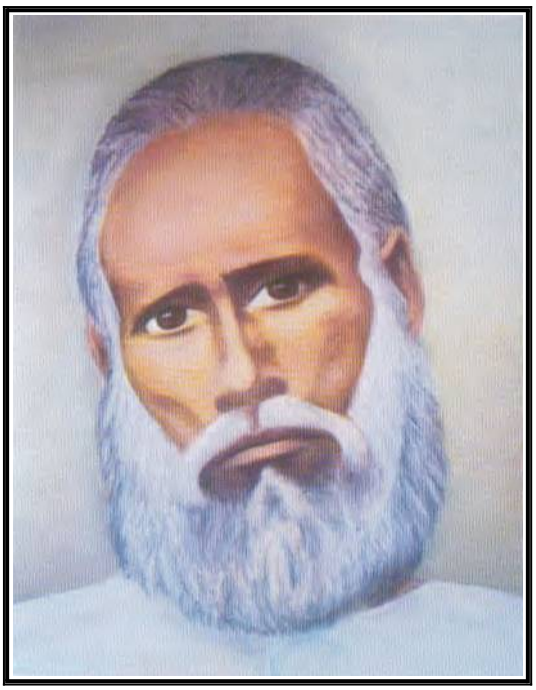
Ali Husayn was able to understand what Baba Tajuddin was hinting at, but his deep love for the lady could not make him change his mind about marrying her. He was too enamoured to give up.

Once, the *tahsildaar* of the Nagpur Revenue Office, Ali Husayn, became so enamoured with an English lady that he wanted to marry her. He successfully made her agree to get married, but she imposed a couple of conditions. She asked him to register his bungalow in her name and to transfer all his money into her bank account. Ali Husayn did not think twice about these conditions. He agreed to them without hesitation.

After handing over his property and money, however, it occurred to him that he should see Baba Tajuddin since there was concern over British rule in India at the time and to ensure he was not putting himself in any danger. Although initially hesitant, Ali Hussain went to the palace in Sakardara to meet Baba Tajuddin to allay his fears and obtain approval. When he arrived, Baba Tajuddin was standing to one side among a crowd of devotees. Suddenly, he looked at Ali directly and asked him to hand over his foreign watch. Ali promptly removed the watch from his wrist and presented it to the saint. Baba Tajuddin looked at it, then returned it to him, saying, “Gentleman, foreign goods are not good”.

Ali Hussain was unsure whether the master was referring to the watch or the girl. Eventually, he was able to understand what Baba Tajuddin was hinting at, but his deep love for the lady could not make him change his mind about marrying her. He was too enamoured to give up. Besides, he had already transferred his property and money to her. He tried to calm his thoughts, assuming Babaji was referring to the ongoing movement to boycott foreign goods rather than his marriage proposal.

Ali went ahead and married the English lady. However, it was not long before differences arose between them. Soon, there was harsh talking and situations in which hurtful words were exchanged. One day, Ali could no longer retain his patience. He slapped his English wife. The lady then filed a lawsuit against him. The court ruled in her favour, regarding the man's action as an insult to not only the lady but a dishonour to the whole British nation. He was also dismissed from his post of *tahsildaar*, and he faced the prospect of being sent to jail.



In this state of helplessness and despair, Ali again visited Baba Tajuddin. This time, Babaji stopped him from paying homage and asked him what jails were for. Ali realised that he had crossed the line. He regretted what he did, but since there was nothing that could be done now, he interpreted the saint's words in the same way as before, giving him a false sense of security again. It so happened that Baba Tajuddin's words turned out to be true. If Ali had heeded the previous words when he was told that "foreign goods are not good" before getting married to the English lady, he would not have lost his job and would not have been sent to jail. All along, the spiritual master, who knew what was best for him, was encouraging him to remain attached to the Muslim culture and not be enamoured by such deceitful outsiders. It took time before he eventually heeded the advice wholeheartedly and began searching in the local markets for 'home goods' instead.

Dismissed for Taking Bribes

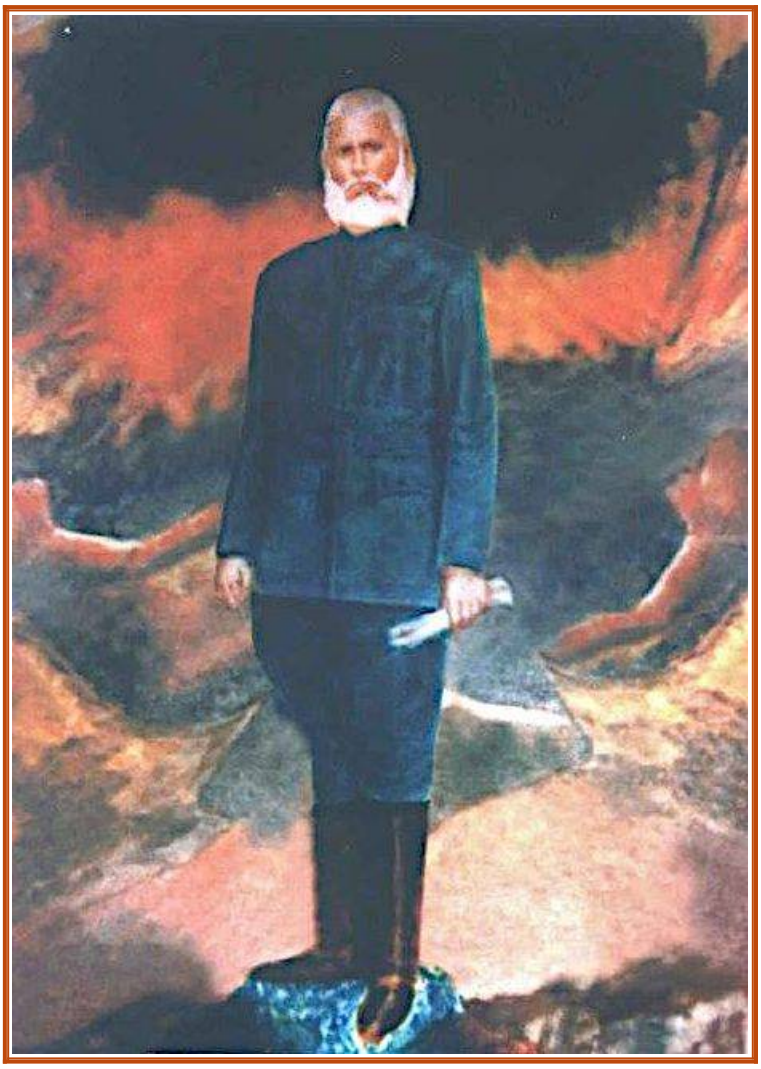
He had taken so many bribes that one day he was caught and dismissed from office... he was told that the barrister who represented him dealt with his case in a remarkable way, and it was quickly dismissed.

The *tahsildaar* of the Nagpur Revenue Office, Ali Husayn, who was once enamoured with an English lady, faced another big problem. He had taken so many bribes that one day, he was caught and dismissed from office. He was expected to receive a long sentence in the high court, so he resorted to seeking shelter in Baba Tajuddin's court. Ali pleaded to Babaji to be saved and promised never to take a bribe again.

Ali was given sanctuary but advised to remain there and beg forgiveness from God. Babaji assured him that nothing would happen if he did that. He was also instructed to spend time doing *zikr*, remembering God by saying "Allah, Allah". Some days passed when Ali Husayn became worried that he might have been issued a warrant and missed a court hearing. However, remembering the master's instruction and assurance, he remained in place. When three months passed, he mentioned his concern to Baba Tajuddin, who relayed the news that the case had been dropped and gave permission for him to return home.

Upon returning home, Ali's wife opened the door and asked straight away whether he had bought her the earrings he had promised. Ali didn't know what she was talking about, but his wife was certain that he had been visiting every seven days and promised to buy them for her. Ali insisted he had been away for three months. His wife was adamant that that was not the case, as she had personally seen him visit every seven days. He went inside, perplexed over what his wife was saying, and carried on as if he had returned after three months.

The next morning, Ali went to his office and was expecting to be asked to explain his absence. He noticed that his daily presence was recorded in the attendance register along with his own signature. He spoke with a close colleague about the matter and was told that he indeed attended the office daily as usual. Ali still insisted he had been with Baba Tajuddin for three months in Sakardara. When he asked what had happened in his case, he was told that the barrister who represented him dealt with his case in a remarkable way, and it was quickly dismissed. Ali asked him to describe the barrister and was told that he was tall, had a slightly dark complexion, and was outspoken. The description made him think it might have been Baba Tajuddin, so he took his colleague over to Sakardara after work. The colleague was surprised because the saint before him was the very barrister he had seen in court representing Ali.



An Easy Way to Earn

Although it would make it easier to make ends meet, he was being warned that it could bring about other undesirable effects as well.

While some people made a living by wrongful means, others tried to find a simpler way to gain their livelihood. Once, Baba Tajuddin had to reprove a poor *mureed* to prevent him from falling into the trap of adopting an easy way to earn money. The *mureed*, Mawlana Yousuf Shah, became friends with a *darwesh*, who one day revealed to him the alchemical formula to turn any metal into gold. The master's lesson was to always encourage people to keep struggling to earn their livelihoods.

Being a *mureed*, he sought his master's permission to take advantage of this opportunity, which would enable him to meet his financial needs easily. He thought it would provide a good source of income and absolve him of the need to toil exhaustively. When Yousuf came into his master's presence, hoping the permission would be granted, he was told, "Do you want to eat filth?" At hearing this response, the *mureed* became cautious and avoided adopting such measures. The experience made him stay away from such *ghalaazat* (filth), as his master described. He understood that although it would make it easier to make ends meet, he was being warned that it could bring about other undesirable effects as well.

Another case of livelihood concerned a singer named Chand Khan [see Ocean of Spiritual Grace], who came from Indore and was a witness to Baba Tajuddin coming out of a securely locked door. He stayed for many days in Baba Tajuddin's company in Waki and undertook voluntary cleaning duties. He began to have thoughts of using his singing ability to earn money. He never mentioned this to anyone, but he could not hide this thought from his master. Baba Tajuddin approached him and warned him not to do it. He explained to him that music can be used as a wonderful means for experiencing divine bliss, but it was not appropriate in his case for earning his livelihood.

Renouncing Worldly Desires

The motive behind using these words was to make him see the futility of the world and kill his worldly desires... "The true path for a faqeer is complete renunciation or freedom from desires."

Once, a person who considered himself to be spiritual came to meet Baba Tajuddin and requested the saint pray for him to gain further spiritual progress. He was instructed: "Kill a dog, bring it here, and we will both eat together."

Baba Tajuddin said this because he could see that the man was immersed in worldly desires. The motive behind using these words was to make him see the futility of the world and kill his worldly desires. He wanted to save him from the illusive glitter of the material world and turn his attention to the real treasure that lies within. Describing the world as an unclean thing like dogs was in reference to a saying of Hazrat Ali (ra):

> *This world is a corpse, and its seekers are dogs!*

In this way, the last few ounces of the man's attachment to the world were completely eradicated. He no longer found contentment in the outer world but in the *ghayb*. The words were shocking, but since he was an aspirant on the spiritual path already and well-versed in knowledge on spirituality, he was able to quickly grasp the importance of detaching himself from desiring the world.

To another devotee who also held worldly desires, Baba Tajuddin said, "Free the captive pigeons". Like captive pigeons, his desires were rumbling in his heart, so driving them out was the only way to pacify them. To achieve this, he advised him to do his worldly duties and:

> *Keep away from those things that keep your thoughts away from God.*

Baba Tajuddin also described the world in other ways. For instance, a seeker once complained that his mind was caught up in duality. The master explained: "It is because the six wicked ones have taken shelter in your heart, so solitude is necessary to be freed from them." On another occasion, Baba Tajuddin clarified what it means to be in solitude:

> *Solitude can be found not only in the woods but also while living in the world. [To achieve this,] the mind should be liberated and aloof from all worldly enticements.*

This pointed to the need for renouncing the world. What Baba Tajuddin meant by this precisely was made clear in another episode involving an army officer named Muhammad Abdul Aziz. He was a follower of Baba Tajuddin and used to recite *naats* in praise of Prophet Muhammad (uwbp) quite often in his master's gatherings. One day, Baba Tajuddin asked him to bring a book. When Abdul Aziz brought it, he opened a page, placed a small twig as a marker, and said, "This is your renunciation". When Abdul Aziz heard this and understood what he meant, his life was transformed. From then on, everything appeared worthless, and he no longer felt the need to get too involved in worldly affairs. He preferred to spend increasingly longer periods in isolation and leave everything else behind. His mind was constantly absorbed in this state of renunciation.

A few days later, Baba Tajuddin asked Abdul Aziz to bring the same book again. This time, the master said, "40, 50, 60, 70, understand what it means to renounce the world". This made Abdul Aziz think deeply. The next day, Baba Tajuddin explained to him that renunciation does not mean abandoning the world altogether. Rather, it means to only abandon those thoughts and worldly preoccupations that hinder one's spiritual progress on the path of God. Baba Tajuddin advised the *faqeers*:

> *The true path for a faqeer is complete renunciation or freedom from desires. If you surrender yourself at the feet of God in this way and solely depend on His will, then rest assured that He will take care of you in all respects and bestow on you everything on earth and in heaven, irrespective of whether you crave for them or not.*

Guidance is a Favour of God

It was a reminder for them of what it means to be favourably treated. It is not due to anyone's own doings; rather, being guided is a favour of God.

Among Baba Tajuddin's own *mureeds*, the greatness of their spiritual master and his display of many *karamaat* led some to develop a superiority complex. They imagined themselves to be better than those around them. For instance, there was one *mureed* who thought he enjoyed a very good relationship with his spiritual master. However, he erred in thinking he was above other *mureeds*, so he cared little for them and did not talk properly with them. Baba Tajuddin corrected him to make it clear, saying: "We don't think of anybody as less than others."

Once, a lady from Bhopal arranged a lavish meal for Baba Tajuddin. While preparing the food, she thought to herself, "Who else would feed Baba Sahib such a meal?" She was feeling excessively proud that no one else was able to prepare such a meal like her. When it was ready, she placed the food in decorated pots. Servants carried it all, and she presented it before Baba Sahib. To her dismay, Baba Sahib said, "This is of no use to me. Who else could serve such a meal?" The lady felt ashamed at hearing these words.

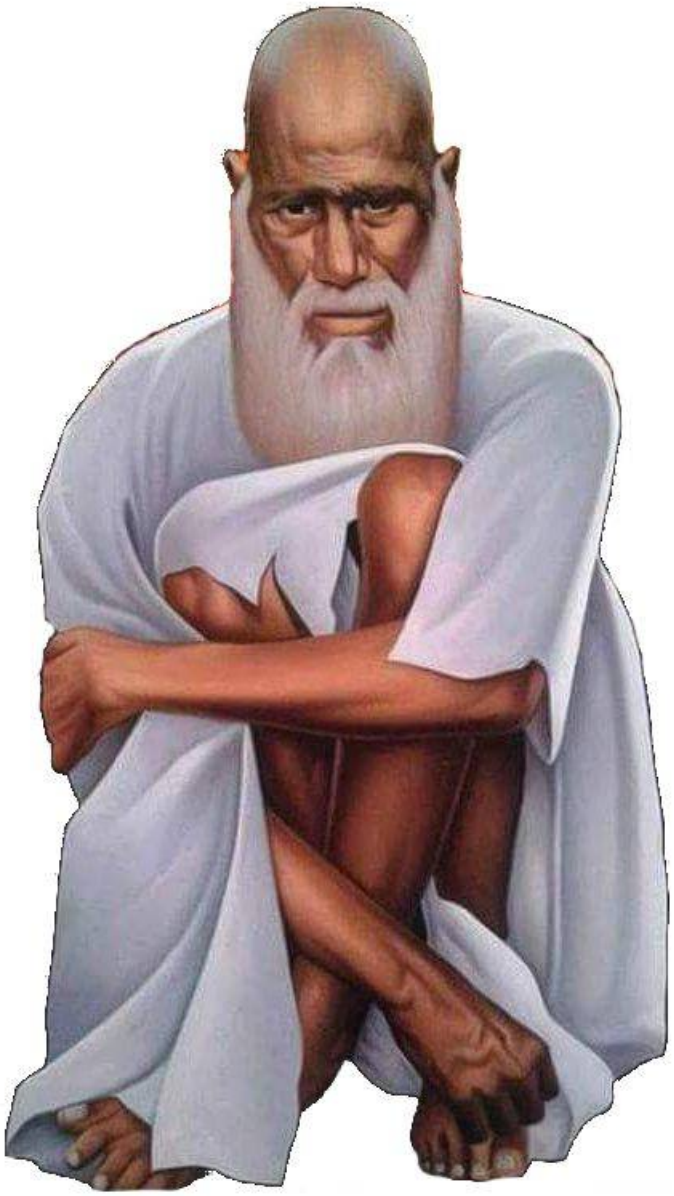
The issue of having a superiority complex once arose among a group of devotees sitting not far from Baba Tajuddin's residence. While talking, one of them said, "The superior one among us is he who has left all his properties at the disposal of Baba Tajuddin". Another said, "It is no less for one to have completely left his shop".

Then they all began mentioning several conditions that were sufficient to indicate their superiority. All at once, Baba Tajuddin appeared before them, having come out of the palace, and recited a verse of the Holy Quran. It was a reminder for them of what it means to be favourably treated. It is not due to anyone's own doings; rather, being guided is a favour of God.

> *They consider it a favour they owe you that they have accepted Islam. Say, 'Do not consider your accepting Islam as*

a favour to me, no. Allah confers a favour on you by guiding you toward belief if you are truthful'. [Quran, 49:17]

The same or a similar verse was also recited to a group of scholars who had become too proud of their knowledge and scholarship in their interpretation of the Quran. In doing so, the intention of the *Chiraghuddin* was to make them imbibe the spirit of the holy scripture rather than wrangle over its minutiae. The key point for them, too, was to recognise that it is God who guides as divine favour.



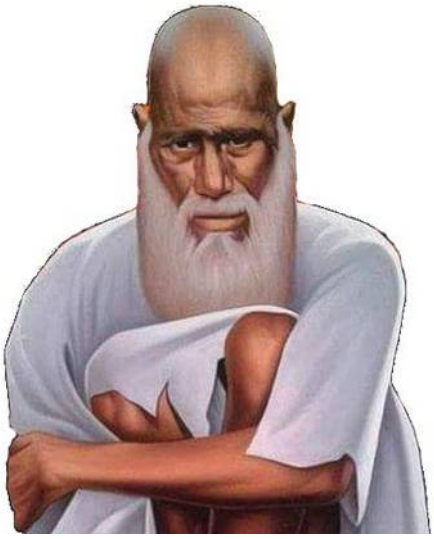
Plenty of Soap to Wash Everyone

Little did he know that it was not words but hearts that were monitored in Baba Tajuddin's court... The master gestured like when scrubbing to wash clothes. The gestures were not without a noticeable effect.

Once, Syed Ziaul-Haq, an advocate of law, visited Baba Tajuddin in Waki Shareef during Ramadan. Baba Tajuddin was sitting in a gathering at the time. The man greeted the saint by saying *salaam* in an intentionally condescending way. Little did he know that it was not words but hearts that were monitored in Baba Tajuddin's court. It was clear that the greeting was not given sincerely and respectfully; rather, it had an undertone of pride, as if the man had come to teach something. Baba Tajuddin remained quiet, even after the man repeated the greeting loudly two more times.

Suddenly, after a brief moment of silence and the devotees waiting to see what would happen, the master entered a state of *jalaal* and asked the man why he was being rude. He added in a questioning tone, "You pretend to be an educated elder yet fail to accept a collective obligation? The man had no manners about how to greet in a gathering, as he was expecting a direct reply from the master despite already having had a response from one of the nearby devotees. It was obvious that he was there only to create an unnecessary scene.

While still in his state of *jalaal*, the master muttered something as the man tried to edge forward. The man tripped three times without any noticeable obstacle in the way. He got up only to trip again as if he had been slapped each time. In spite of this experience and being told off that should have made him understand his erring, he moved ahead and gave *salaam* a fourth time. He thought that it was necessary to get an overt reply as if to gain salvation. Baba Tajuddin asked him why he was so adamant to disregard his manners and added, "Leave now; you will be given 70 rounds of punishment".



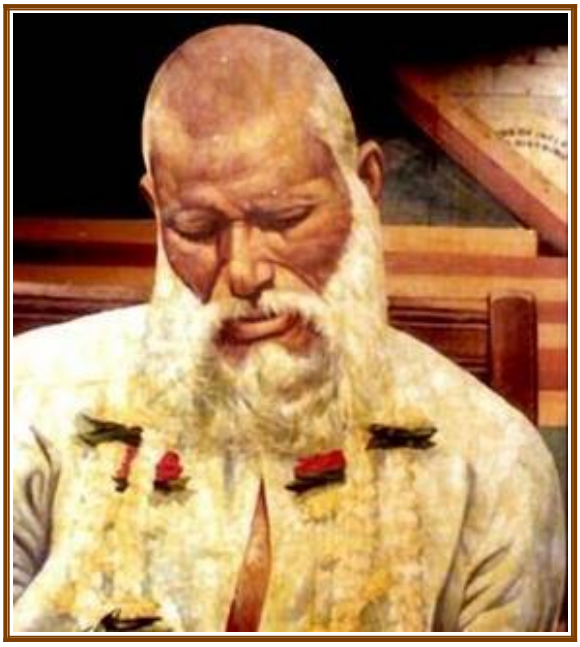
When the man returned home and was eating *halwa* during *sehri* time, it so happened that the number of morsels, which he kept a count of, came to 70. Subsequently, he had to endure tremendous thirst and fell ill during the day. He visited a doctor who was unable to help and advised him to meet Baba Tajuddin instead to get cured. So, he paid the saint another visit, except this time, he was not so adamant about getting a reply for his greeting as last time. Babaji smiled and said, "*Kaale Tajuddin ke paas bahot saabun re, sab ko dho deta* (The dark-complexioned Tajuddin has plenty of soap to wash everyone)".

To his devotees, who laughed at hearing these words, it was obvious that their master was referring to his ability to wash people's pride, ego, and ill-mannered traits. While saying so, the master gestured like when scrubbing to wash clothes. The gestures were not without a noticeable effect. The man revealed later that he felt each wave of the hand across his heart wash away his pride. From then on, Ziaul-Haq became a firm devotee of Baba Tajuddin after the scrubbing was complete.

Disruption of a Zikr Gathering

His actions disturbed the gathering so much that everyone looked towards their master... In a state of bitter regret... he fell at the saint's feet and begged for forgiveness.

One remarkable day, a proud Punjabi man from Madras came to Sakardara to meet Baba Tajuddin in person. His name was Gunda Singh, and he was a thief. Not only that, he adamantly detested saints and anyone considered pious. This included the founder of his own religion, Baba Guru Nanak, about whom he would utter a lot of nonsense and spit out a slew of disrespectful and spiteful words. What made him come to visit Baba Tajuddin was unknown, even to himself. Indeed, it was strange and unusual for such a person to be there, but what is certain is that the visit changed his mental attitude and the way he saw and behaved with all holy and pious souls.



When Gunda Singh arrived, Baba Tajuddin was in the company of a gathering of his devotees, doing *zikr* to remember God and reading *durood shareef*. The ambience at that moment was full of serenity and charged with charm and blessings as the place was illuminated by divine lights. Once inside the positive environment, he unleashed his usual barrage of hateful speech, albeit with greater difficulty than usual. Some participants of the gathering got up and tried to calm him down, but he managed to make his way further inside. Then, more people got up and forcefully stopped him from proceeding any further and from uttering the rubbish that he was spewing.

When he was put under some control, he stopped for a while, but again, he began showing himself as a nuisance. He made it apparent to

everyone that he was there to disrupt the gathering. His actions disturbed the gathering so much that everyone looked towards their master to see what he would advise. Baba Tajuddin was absorbed in *zikr*. It seemed as if he was unaware of the disturbance. Then, suddenly, he opened his eyes and turned his attention to Gunda Singh. He said to him, "Why are you croaking like a frog? Let's hear what you have to say, loud and clearly."

These words made Gunda Singh even more angry. He tried to spew some malicious words, but he found that he was unable to say anything distinctly. All he could utter were croaking sounds like a frog. This situation made him very worried. He looked around, a little embarrassed this time that, although he was still the centre of attention, it was he himself who was worthy of being mocked. Then, with his hands on his head in a state of bitter regret, he got up and slowly walked towards the spiritual master who moments ago, he was thinking of disparagingly. He fell at the saint's feet and begged for forgiveness. Baba Tajuddin told him to speak like a human being and asked, "Gunda Singh, how about you speak like a human now?"

Gunda Singh tried to do just that and found that he was able to speak normally again. This time he burst out with the *takbeer* of '*Allahu Akbar*' (God is the greatest), begged for forgiveness once more and pleaded to become a Muslim. The Taj Baba forgave him and assisted him in converting to Islam. From then on, not only did Gunda Singh rectify his mental attitude and abandon his once putrid ways, he also became very fond of Baba Tajuddin to the extent that he extolled his virtues. The turnaround was even more surprising to the people who knew him back home in Madras. Perhaps the strange visit was a calling by Baba Tajuddin, unbeknown to Gunda Singh himself, for the very purpose that it served.

Singing without Ego

It was he who was honouring her by allowing her to sing in his presence. In other words, it was necessary to bring her ego down.

A guest named Sultan Bai, who was a famous singer, once came to Sakardara from Banaras for a *darshan* of Baba Tajuddin, as she had done a few times before. Whenever she visited, she would sing in praise of Baba Tajuddin's qualities of sainthood. On this occasion, she sang in praise of Hazrat Imam Hussain as an emperor (*shahenshah*) and then in praise of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (uwbp), in which the following words were sung:

> *Everyone respects the one to whose waist a cloak is tied, whoever has tried.*

On hearing the first one, Baba Tajuddin likened himself to an emperor, saying, "I am one", and on hearing the second, he tied a blanket around his own waist and fell into a trance as she continued to sing.

Another professional female singer and *tawaif* once came to Nagpur as a guest from Delhi on a late summer's day. She was the legendary Jankibai Allahabadi (1875-1934). She was popularly known as Chhappan Chhurri due to her disfigurement from 56 scars in her childhood made by a deranged policeman. Her admirers called her a nightingale (bulbul). Her slightly high-pitched voice was enchanting for its sweetness. She gained it by drinking water from her own well. She specialised in light classical music like *thumri*, which was popular in her time, and as a poetess, she composed a collection called 'Diwan-e-Janki'. One of her titles was a *kajri* (semi-classical song) titled 'Rumjhum Badarva Barse'. It expressed the longing of a heroine for her lover while dark monsoon clouds hung over the summer skies.

Jankibai enjoyed the privilege of singing for King George V in 1911, the Rani of Jaunpur, and other native royals. Not wanting any other great person to be deprived of hearing her sweet voice live, she desired to sing for the magnanimous Baba Tajuddin. No sooner was Jankibai ushered into his presence with very high hopes; he appeared to have lost his temper and said, "Take the bitch away from my sight. Does she think she can charm me with the sweetness of her voice?"

Jankibai was naturally shocked. Raja Bhosle promptly saw to it that she retreated from his sight. Having calmed down a little, Baba Tajuddin ordered to be taken to the riverside. The request was strange because at that time, it had become a bog of mud and mire due to heavy monsoon rains, and there were dark, overhanging clouds. After alighting from his carriage, he waded through toward the bank and squatted as one would sit on a sofa. He then ordered the singer to be brought there, too, if she was willing. He told his *mureeds*, "Tell that singer from Delhi that if she is willing, she can come here and sing for me".

Jankibai unhesitatingly complied. She was still grateful for the opportunity and was not bothered by the unexpected change of venue. Despite her costly attire, she waded through as well and sat down on a watery patch along with her paraphernalia. She entertained Babaji continuously for almost three hours. Others present described the atmosphere as charged with divine ecstasy. Baba Tajuddin then thanked her and sent her away. The reason for making her sing there was to remind her that it was not her honouring the saint by offering to entertain him, no matter how great an artist she was. Rather, it was he who was honouring her by allowing her to sing in his presence. In other words, it was necessary to bring her ego down.

Jankibai of Allahabad in a recording studio

The World as a Scorpion

> The leaf became a scorpion. She thought that it was going to come forward and sting her, but as she moved back instantly, it looked like a leaf to her again... [It] was the world... trying to bite her.

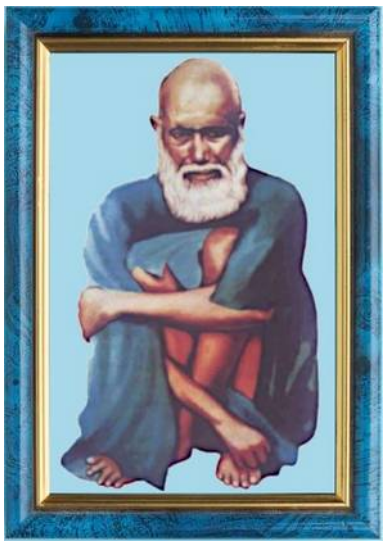
Among the visitors who came to meet Baba Tajuddin were remorseful prostitutes, including courtesans. Some had already abandoned their old occupation before coming cleanly to meet the saint or actively sought his help, while others were not quite there yet and needed a more potent remedy to achieve their restitution. Usually, Baba Tajuddin would turn his back whenever such a prostitute appeared to indicate his intense displeasure, but he never insulted or cursed them. One such famous lady came into the saint's presence one day and ended up begging for his forgiveness before she, too, was transformed.

Such visitors were typically advised to "choose only one horse for conveyance" and not to eat "too many bananas". Baba Tajuddin always addressed them as "*Amma*" (mother) to make a powerful impact. One man noted that there was not a single prostitute remaining in the nearby areas who had not visited the saint and begged for forgiveness. The men who visited them were also admonished by being told, "*Achhe bachhe gandi jagga nahi jaate* (Good children don't go to dirty places)". Once, he said this to a man who frequented a red-light district in Lahore.

The lady in question, who came from a little afar, got a chance to speak to Baba Tajuddin directly and was told, "*Amma*, choose a horse for yourself". As usual, Babaji then turned his back towards her. She was bothered by this response, so the master resorted to showing her what was right for her another way. He turned around and gave her a leaf to prostrate to. It was a strange request, but she complied nonetheless. As she was about to do so, the leaf became a scorpion. She thought that it was going to come forward and sting her, but as she moved back instantly, it looked like a leaf to her again. He repeated the instruction, and the same thing happened two more times. It kept turning into a scorpion. After the third time, she complained about what was happening, so he explained that the scorpion was the world that was trying to bite her. She immediately begged for forgiveness and vowed to never live like that again.

Saved from Suicide

Her only hope was her awareness of Baba Tajduddin as a helper and saviour of people... She was sure the saviour was Baba Tajuddin... She resolved there and then to beg forgiveness from Allah for her sins and start a new life.



A prostitute in Nagpur was so deeply depressed, distraught, and distressed that she decided to commit suicide. Her suicidal thoughts were exacerbated by the fact that she had been diagnosed with syphilis and was extremely worried about her sins. Her only hope was knowing that Baba Tajduddin was a helper and saviour of people, including sinners. She had heard about his love and affection for all kinds of needy and sick persons and also had a picture of him hanging on a wall in her apartment. She considered herself as one of his devotees, although she had never met him in person.

Regardless, the dire situation made the lady decide to go ahead with committing suicide by jumping off the building. She felt almost totally helpless but took one last look at the picture while weeping profusely and praying to be saved somehow. As she was about to jump, she felt a hand grab her to prevent her from falling. She did not see anyone there, but the hand led her to her bed. She was already half unconscious and fell asleep instantly. The other presence was Baba Tajuddin. During this time, he put saliva with his fourth finger on the point of inflammation.

When she awoke, she noticed a discharge of pus from the area of inflammation where the skin was cut open. She had a vague memory of what happened and was sure the saviour was Baba Tajuddin. She found that she had been completely relieved of syphilis. Not only that, but she felt much better and healthy overall and was no longer depressed. She felt greatly relieved. She resolved there and then to beg forgiveness from Allah for her sins and start a new life, which gave her deep satisfaction and contentment. Her devotion to Baba Tajuddin increased as well.

Frantic at Internal Enemies

What Baba Tajuddin appeared to be doing outwardly was directed at burning and getting rid of all the evil propensities that were extinguishing people internally in those days.

A distinguished visitor of Baba Tajuddin recalled a strange sight when he once visited the saint in the early 1910s, before World War I. He was Sri Chincholkar from Pusad village in Yavatmal district. Babaji was behaving very unusually that day. Becoming spiritually absorbed, speaking strangely, and even admonishing guests was not uncommon, but on this occasion, something more desperate had come to his attention.

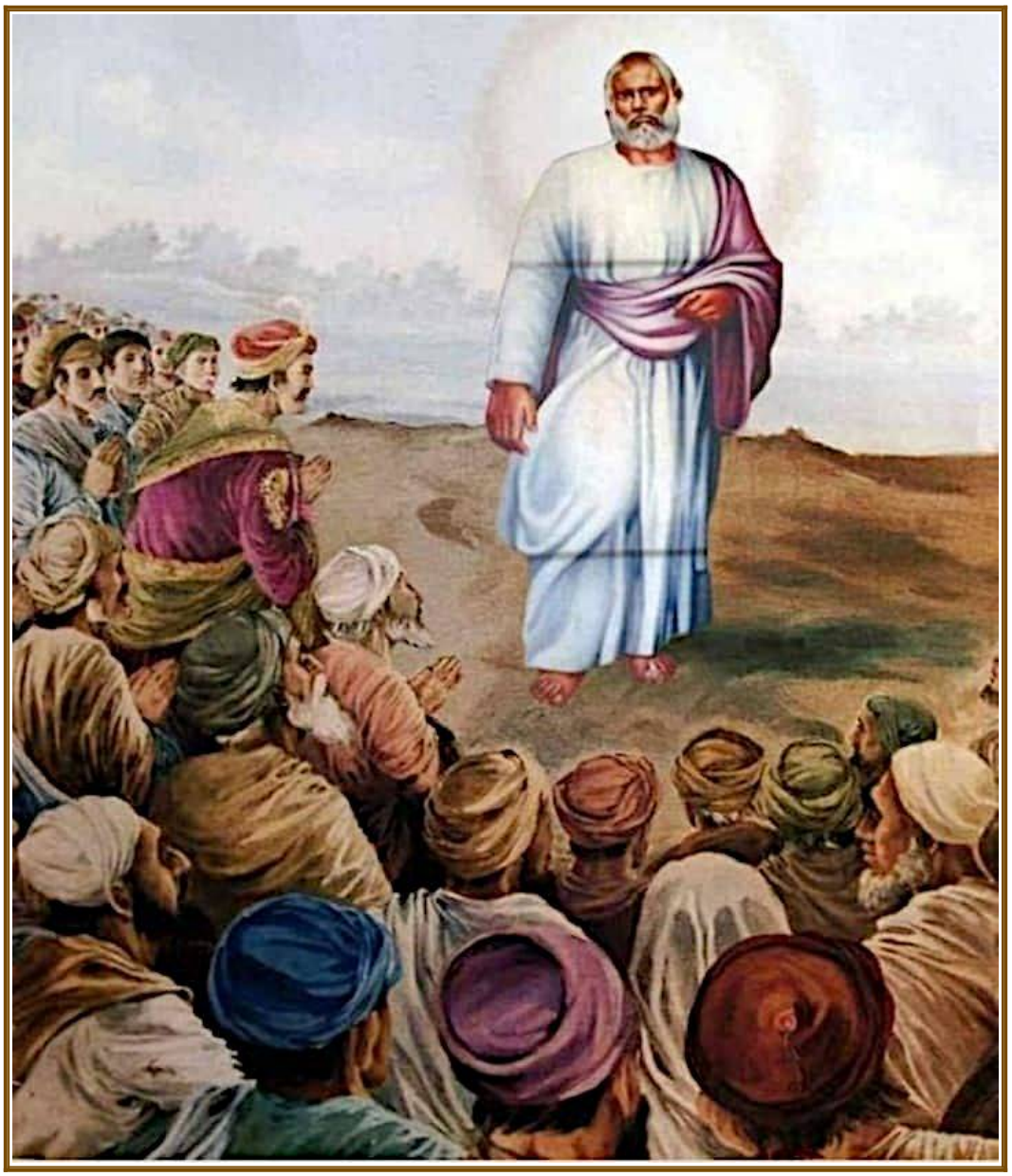
Chincholkar described seeing Babaji in a very upset mood. He appeared to have lost his senses after coming out of absorption. He set fire to pieces of cloth and threw burning sticks and stones at anyone who tried to approach him. No one dared to get any closer. He was clearly frantic about something. Onlookers could not fathom what had happened. They thought he was having a fit. Only a few understood the actual target of his controlled fury and frustration.

The target of the unusual behaviour was the internal enemies of men or their inner demons. What Babaji appeared to be doing outwardly was directed at burning and getting rid of all the evil propensities that were extinguishing people internally in those days. Sins and evil were becoming so common around the world that conditions were brewing for major worldwide conflicts and calamities to occur. This was the desperation that compelled him to deal with the situation in this manner.

It took a while before Babaji regained normality in the eyes of those present. Over the course of the next few days and weeks, he focused more on dealing with people's internal conditions. He tried to rectify their thoughts and feelings to help them control their evil impulses and temptations. The visit was memorable for Sri Chincholkar not only because of the unusual behaviour, but also because it confirmed that the Muslim saint was very much aware of and concerned about man's true internal enemies.

When many people were gathered outside the palace one day, Baba Tajuddin looked at them, raised his hands towards the sky, and said, "O Lord! Ask me for an explanation regarding their sins and not them, for they are mine!" He would also frequently quote a particular Quranic verse more than usual to remind people about only doing what is good and refraining from evil:

> *Famaya'mal mithqaala dharratin khayranya-rah, wa manya'mal mithqaala dharratin sharranya-rah.*
>
> *So whoever does an atom's weight of good will see it, and whoever does an atom's weight of evil will see it. [HQ, 99:7-8]*



Turkey's Victory in War

The outcome of this battle was exactly as Baba Tajuddin had not only described, but also demonstrated as if he was participating in it... Baba Tajuddin's decision to do something to secure a victory for the Turkish forces was prompted by one of his disciples.

One day in the winter of 1912, during the First Balkan War, Baba Tajuddin was seen making a mound and piling stones under a shade in a field of acacia trees deep in the woods of Waki Shareef. Those present assisted him in gathering stones, and eventually, the pile was about three feet high. Baba Tajuddin then asked them to quickly make a few more such mounds.

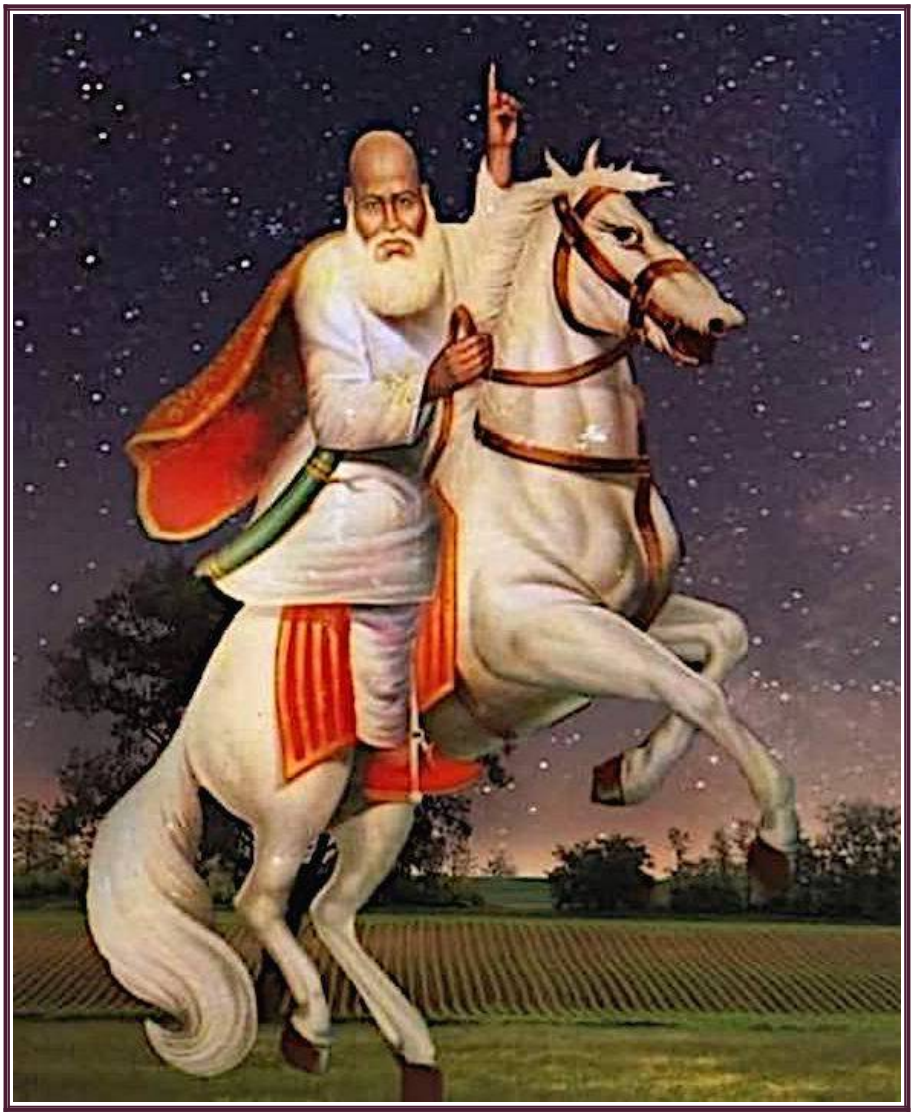
Among the witnesses were Fareed Khan Fiza and Professor Muhammad Abdul Kawwi, who thought their master was behaving strangely. When all the mounds were ready, Baba Tajuddin took a wooden stick in one hand and started issuing military orders along the lines of: "Take your positions" and "Such and such division is to march in this direction, and other divisions are to go in that direction." It seemed as if the invisible situation escalated, as he then ordered them to take their positions and to "attack and fire".

A while later, he elatedly said, "Greek army soldiers have fled and some have been caught". The Greeks had lost their ability to coordinate and defend themselves, so they scrambled and retreated. In fact, it was a disastrous defeat for them that exposed major flaws in the way they were organised. He added further, "We have broken the morale of the Greeks. They no longer have any strength to stand against us."

Baba Tajuddin then placed the stick between the stones and called it the flag of Turkey's victory. More people had gathered by this time to see what was happening. A Turkish victory seemed unreal, but two days later, a newspaper published the news that Turkey had defeated Greece and captured a huge booty and other valuables. The outcome of this battle was exactly as Baba Tajuddin had not only described but also demonstrated as if he were participating in it.

This was likely the Battle of Sorovic (22-24 October 1912, Sorovich/Sorovichevo). The only other battle in which the Usmanians

(Ottomans) gained a victory against the Greeks was the Battle of Driskos that same year. After withstanding repeated attacks on the 22nd and 23rd from the Greek 5th Division encamped at Sorovic and the defeat of the Usmanian 18th Infantry Division, the situation changed completely and miraculously on the morning of the 24th. With Baba Tajuddin guiding the Usmanian 16th and 17th divisions as reinforcements, the Turks were able to enter the Greek western flank undetected, penetrate their lines, capture their battery, and launch successful attacks against the Greek eastern flank. This continued till they were easily overpowered and either killed or fled. Their commander, Matthaiopoulos, was dismissed by the Greek army from his command following this humiliating defeat.



The situation was very different in previous battles during this war. It was the Greeks who were winning. Baba Tajuddin's decision to do something to secure a victory for the Turkish forces was prompted by one of his *mureeds*, Yusuf Ali. Seeing that Baba Tajuddin was a great saint who helped thousands of people, and because of the terrible losses that the

Turkish Muslims were suffering, he specially requested Baba Tajuddin to intervene. Yusuf Ali was a very pious and dedicated man, so his request was accepted.

Following the unexpected success of the Usmanians in this battle in a war in which they had previously been defeated, a journalist reported that a Hindustani man was seen on a horse majestically commanding the Turkish forces, which were otherwise led by Hasan Pasha. When a photo of the mystery man was sent from London to Charles Hardinge, the Viceroy of India in Delhi, he ordered that the matter be investigated. During the investigation, the photo came to the attention of Muhammad Usman Khan and his friend Fareed Khan Fida, a *mureed* of Baba Tajuddin, who was working for a Deputy Commissioner. Fareed was astounded by what he saw because he immediately recognised the Baba as his own spiritual master. He made it clear to the deputy:

> *This is my murshid. It's him on the horse. Every Muslim and Hindu in Hindustan recognises him. You can ask anyone in the office.*

When the Deputy Commissioner asked around at the office, and everyone identified him as the same, he alerted the Viceroy, who then notified his superiors in London. It was from that time on that Baba Tajuddin gained some admirers in Europe among the gentry. It was in confirmation of his participation in a battle of the Balkan War.

The Maharaja of Hyderabad

The Maharaja received his nugget when Baba Tajuddin told him to go back to his home straight away... He thought what better sign could there be for a good outcome.

In his travelogue 'Saer-e-Nagpur', Maharaja Sir Kishen Pershad Bahadur Yamin (1864-1940), a rich and wealthy nobility and prime minister of the state of Hyderabad Deccan, described his meeting with Baba Tajuddin. He was a prolific Urdu writer and poet. The Maharaja himself was always fond of meeting pious people wherever he could, irrespective of their caste or creed, but the meeting with Baba Tajuddin in May 1913 was unforgettable. The reason for his visit to Nagpur was his ailing son.

Sir Kishen Pershad

In that year, the Maharaja's third son, Usman Parshad, fell seriously ill. He was afflicted with a fever that refused to subside. He invited the finest of physicians in Hyderabad, but they could not cure his son. They all failed to make him recover fully. He then took his son to another city, Viqarabad, in the hope that perhaps the changed climate

would make a difference. He took his daughter there as well to get her married, but neither her marriage nor his son's recovery happened, so they quickly returned to Hyderabad.

The daughter was soon engaged successfully, but the son's condition began deteriorating rapidly. Therefore, in spite of the good news concerning his daughter, the Maharaja was very worried. In this state of distress, he was preparing to set off to the railway station to journey somewhere to get some relief because his own health was being badly affected, too. He advised his wife to continue praying for their son, and to inform him in case he recovers by the mercy of God so that he could come back immediately.

Before departing from the house, some of his friends arrived and advised him to go to Nagpur and visit Baba Tajuddin for help. This advice touched the Maharaja deeply, as he was happy to meet pious people. He was sure that at least he would end up writing something good about Baba Tajuddin. The Maharaja, therefore, proceeded to Nagpur along with two attendants in the middle of the night by train: an officer named Mirza Ahmad Baig, and his assistant Ramchandar Parshad. Despite announcing he was merely taking a few days off to relax without disclosing the location and travelling in secret, his presence inside his private carriage attracted considerable attention. It was not long before everyone knew the prime minister was heading for Nagpur when he reached Manmad Junction. Thereafter, he was greeted at every station. This helped lift his spirits and strengthen his hopes during the journey to meet Baba Tajuddin.

When the Maharaja arrived in Nagpur the following day, he sent his officer to procure a motor car. He described later in his travelogue that the drive from the station was a pleasant one. He was particularly impressed by the straight lines of houses, the wide and clean roads, and the long colonnades of trees, which provided shade and comfort to all classes of travellers. However, when he came to know that

Baba Tajuddin was residing in the palace of Maharaja Raghuji Rao Bhonsle, he thought it would be inappropriate for him to go to Baba Tajuddin straight away. For this reason, he sent his officer to go and convey *salaam*, be introduced, and seek Baba Tajuddin's permission to meet him. When Mirza Ahmad entered the palace, he saw Baba Tajuddin was asleep, so he waited patiently. When the situation was appropriate, he conveyed his *salaam*, whereupon Baba Tajuddin told him, "Despite having the lamp, he is worried about the lamp, so tell him to go home".

The Maharaja felt some consolation after hearing these words because he thought they conveyed good news. At the same time, however, he thought perhaps Baba Tajuddin meant something else since the words were cryptic, and Baba Tajuddin must have been in an absorbed state when he uttered them. His concerns were confirmed when he received a telegram the following day informing him that his son's health was deteriorating further.

Raja Sahib became more worried than before and was determined to meet Baba Tajuddin himself to seek his favour in this matter before returning to Hyderabad. Along with his two attendants, he headed straight for the palace. When they arrived alongside the palace gardens, they enquired whether Baba Tajuddin was inside the palace. Upon receiving confirmation, they proceeded to the main gate, and Raja Sahib immediately got out of the car and stepped onto the lawn. He described the scene he witnessed in his travelogue in the following words:

> *A large number of visitors were gathered at the palace, all eager to meet Babaji and gain the favour of God through his presence. The mere appearance of the majzoob raised their hopes for the fulfilment of what they wished for. The purveyor of solutions to their needs was in fact a pious servant of God wearing a robe of honour and having the capability to cure every pain and disease. He is a healer deserving great respect. Whilst observing this, Babaji was facing the other way. Then he turned around and made me startled by looking into my eyes and feel something that cannot be easily described in words. It was as if the power of electricity was strengthening the connection. It seemed like ten or so minutes passed in this state of pleasure in seeing Babaji.*

The Maharaja received his nugget when Baba Tajuddin told him to go back straight away because he said he was doing mischief. He, therefore, conveyed his *salaam* and left from there. He did not need to even mention his son. Others may have wondered why he was said to be doing mischief and thought he should have asked for something. However, the "brilliant connection (*zabardast nisbat*)" as he described it in his own words, made him satisfied internally, and it reassured him. After retreating a little, Baba Tajuddin approached him, took a glass bangle from a female gardener there to give to him, and instructed him, "Take it and now leave".

Raja Sahib considered the bangle a good augury of what was to come. A moment later, when a devotee lit a beedi, Baba Tajuddin asked for that to be given to the Maharaja, too, which he gladly accepted. He gave *salaam* again and tried to leave once more, but Baba Tajuddin came closer, so he stood still. He was mesmerised by the saint's enrapturing gaze, which he described as "eye-flirting (*deedbaazi*)". Furthermore, he admitted in his travelogue that his well-trained pen was unable to express the exact feeling he had that moment in words, but it was sublime:

> *His spiritual connection (nisbat) was incredibly powerful... His gaze had the power of lightning.*

After being transfixed for around ten minutes, Baba Tajuddin deliberately turned his attention to pigeons flying in the sky at that time to break the connection. He then took a handful of soil from his flowering pots to present it to them. God knows best what Baba Tajuddin was doing for those pigeons.

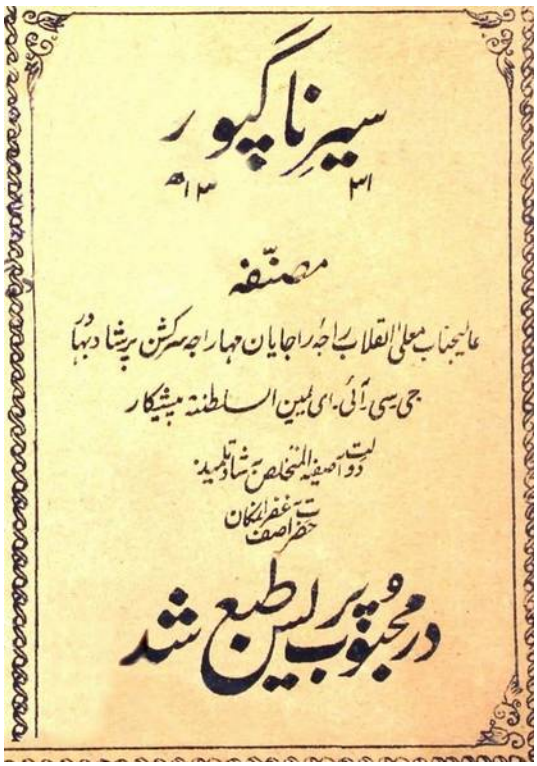
As the Maharaja retreated, Baba Tajuddin gave a military salute and said, "All right, good morning", which he understood as meaning that everything is now good. He thought what better sign could there be for a good outcome. He interpreted it in his travelogue further as:

All shall be well, all shall be well, and all manner of things shall be.

The Maharaja conveyed *salaam* once more and again set off to leave. This time, however, Baba Tajuddin himself came over to his car before his attention turned elsewhere. The Maharaja finally expressed the last farewell and headed straight to the place where he was staying in Nagpur. He described his feelings about this moment in his travelogue as follows:

> *When the hairs of the beloved had reached her back and the night was covered in complete darkness, I went to sleep that night in a state of relief.*

He described Baba Tajuddin himself as a highly pious man of God residing in Nagpur with a perfect personality whose prayers are accepted without question.



Saer-e-Nagpur (book cover)

The next day, when the Maharaja reached Manmad Junction during his return, he received a telegram informing him that his son's health was now much better and that his temperature had lowered to a safer level. Hearing this great news, the Maharaja was very pleased, and also eager to reach home as quickly as possible. When he reached home a week after he left, he saw that all was well, so he prostrated for thanksgiving and made arrangements for his daughter to be married.

Some days later, the Maharaja visited Nagpur to meet Baba Tajuddin for the second time. This time, he brought with him a royal decree from the King of Hyderabad, Nawab Mir Usman Ali Khan, granting Baba Tajuddin some estate. However, Baba Tajuddin tore the papers and said: "The Nizam of Hyderabad has gone made, as he is giving land papers to the owner of the land. Tell him that we have given land to him."

Revelations of World War I

The things Babaji revealed were newsworthy and insightful revelations of World War I... Knowing that Baba Tajuddin was able to describe future events, people would write down the information he gave and have it published in newspapers as predictions.

A couple of years after Turkey's victory in two battles of the First Balkan War with Greece, World War I began in July 1914 and lasted until November 1918. Whilst maintaining his routine and other duties in Nagpur, Baba Tajuddin was well-informed of important events taking place in other parts of the world, and he often mentioned relevant things to his close devotees. The things Babaji revealed were newsworthy and insightful revelations of World War I, obtained remotely and supernaturally. This would not otherwise have been possible to obtain by ordinary means precisely when the events were taking place when they were impending, or without having access to inside information.

Shattered crowns (Start of WWI)

The *tahsildaar*, Sayyad Muhammad Isa, once had a vivid dream in the summer of 1914 in which he saw Baba Tajuddin standing boldly on a platform wearing a crown on his head. He took off his crown and threw it high up in the sky, but then another crown appeared from somewhere and placed itself on his head. He again did the same, and yet another crown appeared. This continued for a few times. Babaji then smiled as he set his sight on the *tahsildaar*, whereupon Isa woke up from his dream.

Archduke Franz Ferdinand and his wife on the day of their assassination

When Baba Yusuf Shah interpreted this dream, Isa was told that it indicated imminent changes of thrones and crowns, as well as the onset of war. Over a month

later, the crowns of several European nations started shattering or were changed. It began with that of Archduke Franz Ferdinand and his wife of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, when they were assassinated on 28 June 1914. This event triggered the First World War, and several countries were invaded beginning with Germany's invasion of Belgium.

Unable to save Antwerp (Siege of 1914)

Once, when German troops besieged a garrison of Belgian fortress troops, its field army, and the British Royal Naval Division, Baba Tajuddin was seen in an angry state, striking at a stone in a house. The Belgian and British troops escaped to the Netherlands during this first year of the First World War. Referring to the British forces and their inability to save the city, Baba Tajuddin was heard saying on the evening of 8 October, "They pretend to be big, yet they could not save Antwerp".

Belgian soldiers in Antwerp in 1914 prior to the siege

Belgian and British soldiers fleeing to the Netherlands in October 2014

Knowing that Baba Tajuddin was able to describe future events, some people would write down the information he gave and have it published in newspapers as predictions. The details of this uttering were also noted. A few days later, it was confirmed that the fortifications around Antwerp were indeed bombed, and the city was seized precisely when Baba Tajuddin revealed it to them in his own peculiar way.

Giving water on the battlefield

Baba Tajuddin was not only well-informed of global events during the world war but also an active remote participant. His strange behaviour,

signs, and gestures were directed at influencing and controlling the outcome of the war. Shirdi Sai Baba behaved similarly during this period, and the two often collaborated.

Soldiers drinking water from earthen jars

One day, during the war, Baba Tajuddin looked at others as if he was very thirsty. He kept drinking lots of water till all the water in the earthen jars was empty. Some of the onlookers present could not understand why he was suddenly so thirsty. When eventually they asked, Baba Sahib told them they were all thirsty and injured and asked them back, “How else would they have found water in the middle of a battlefield?” What was actually happening was that Baba Tajuddin was providing water to injured soldiers. This shows he was also engaged in looking after some soldiers elsewhere in the world while physically present in Nagpur.

The Couple in Black

They had been living as nagins for four thousand years, and... they appeared in the form of humans only to meet him so that the others would not get frightened.

One late night, during the rainy season toward the end of the war, Baba Tajuddin was travelling from Waki Shareef to Sakardara. While passing through a thick part of the woods, suddenly, a strange-looking old couple dressed in black appeared. They came closer and paid homage to the saint.

Then, to the surprise of those accompanying their master, they said that they had been waiting for this moment for a very long time. Their expression of delight was puzzling. The time and place were not what one would expect for someone to come to meet the saint. What they witnessed was even more perplexing when their master put his hand on each of their heads, and they became gleeful, turned around, and whisked away sinuously just as suddenly as they had appeared as if from nowhere, the couple in black disappeared into the darkness of the night.

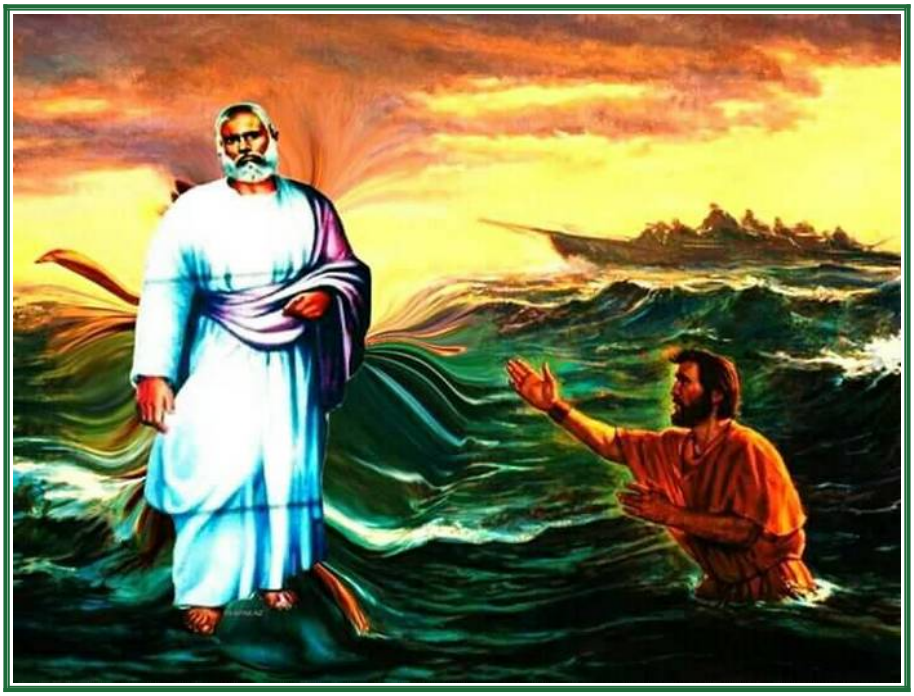
Naturally, once the couple in black had gone, those present turned to their master and asked who they were. Baba Tajuddin told them that they had been living as *nagins* (serpents) for four thousand years and that they appeared in the form of humans only to meet him so that the others would not get frightened. The group continued their journey to Sakardara. As with the unfolding of the rest of the war, the story of this visitation sure grabbed the attention and interest of many for several days. However, no one was eager to seek out that couple in black at the same time and place.

The Matched Tasbih

Baba Tajuddin steered the ship to the nearest shore. When they saw the saint on the shore, they quickly took a picture, but only the tasbih was clearly visible.

One morning after the world war had ended, an Englishman came to the palace in Sakardara to meet Baba Tajuddin with a *tasbih* (rosary) in his pocket. Baba Sahib initially avoided facing the guest. He had already alerted his close disciples earlier in the morning that an Englishman would be coming that day, and he would try to avoid him at first.

The Englishman arrived while the saint was entering his room, but the man was fixated on the *tasbih* in the saint's hand to match it with his own. Baba Sahib expressed his dissatisfaction over why he was doing that and left to go into the palace. However, the man followed suit, so Baba Sahib came back out. When Baba Sahib's disciples asked the man if he needed any assistance, he told them he had come from Europe to investigate something. It was during the course of this investigation that he obtained information leading him to want to meet Baba Tajuddin in Nagpur in person. They gave him some food and let him settle down before continuing.



The Englishman explained further that he was the captain of a ship and that his ship was going to sink during a severe storm

some time back. It was then that he remembered hearing about a Muslim saint with miraculous powers in India through one of his friends. The situation was dire. The ship would have sunk were it not for his prayer at the last moment for the saint's intercession. He recalled his companions telling him that they saw someone under the ship. They thought perhaps he was one of their own crew who had toppled overboard. Since they were in danger themselves, there was nothing they could do to help.

A few moments later, however, what they realised was that the ship had become stable. It was as if the person under it was somehow holding the ship up to prevent it from sinking, though it seemed unbelievable. The captain was sure his prayer had been answered because there was no other possible explanation. They saw the man, who, instead of drowning, was their angelic saviour. Baba Tajuddin steered the ship to the nearest shore. When they saw the saint on the shore, they quickly took a picture, but only the *tasbih* was clearly visible.

Having told this much, a few disciples then recalled that a while back, their master suddenly entered a tumultuous pool of water. They said he was controlling something, and when he came out, he told them about some ship he had rescued from a severe storm. Now that the captain had described his own experience, it made sense to them what Baba Tajuddin was doing after all, which it did not at the time. The captain was also now certain that he had come to the right place and that it was Baba Tajuddin sitting within his view, who was his angelic saviour. He matched Baba Tajuddin's *tasbih* and found it to be exactly the same as the one in the picture, just like the duplicate he bought that was in his pocket. Not that he needed any more confirmation, but the saint's smile reassured him further in his heart. The captain expressed his deepest gratitude to the saint for saving him and his crew from their ship sinking into the sea.

The Arab Guest

> "Control your desires, then you will receive the light to guide you along the divine path to attain God... He alone is indeed a man who has conquered all human desires and anger."

One day, an Arab came to meet Baba Tajuddin in Sakardara in 1920 to seek his blessings. When he arrived there, Baba Tajuddin was walking briskly to and fro near the palace. He availed himself of this opportunity to be near the saint, and so he started walking behind him. All the while, he kept reading *durood shareef* to send blessings on the Holy Prophet Muhammad (uwbp).

Suddenly, Baba Tajuddin turned around and said to him: "Control your desires, then you will receive the light to guide you along the divine path to attain God." Baba Tajuddin advised him further that miseries and obstacles befall a person due to mortal desires, particularly lust for women, as otherwise, "life is only bliss".

On another occasion, Baba Tajuddin reinforced the same point to the same Arab:

> *He alone is indeed a man who has conquered all human desires and anger. These are the foremost enemies on the path of divinity. Lust for women and anger makes a person blind. There is no other way but to conquer them if you truly want to tread the divine path to attain God.*

Baba Tajuddin stressed forsaking desires to many others as well because, as he said: "It is the real path for a *faqeer*." Besides lust and anger, he also tried to free people from the grip of greed. He often adopted a strict tone to achieve this, but his heart always brimmed with love.

Brought Back from the Dead

He immediately entered a meditative state... Gulab was miraculously brought back from the dead... [Gulab] described his personal experience in detail.

There was once a tea seller named Gulab Singh from Sagarpur who was very attached to Baba Tajuddin. He suffered from a very serious and incurable condition and died as a result of it. When he passed away, Baba Tajuddin's devotee Hayat Khan mentioned this to him to ask about his burial, and he immediately entered a meditative state. After opening his eyes a few moments later, he gave the good news that Gulab was alive and well.

Gulab was miraculously brought back from the dead and given a new lease of life. Some newer devotees present were initially in disbelief as to how this could be possible when they themselves saw Gulab dead. They were surprised that their master was making such a claim. However, their *bhakti* led all of them to accept the news without question.

When the devotees returned to where they had earlier witnessed Gulab dead, they saw him sitting up and talking with those around him. They questioned him eagerly about what had happened. He told them he was about to tell something they would find unbelievable. He described his personal experience in detail. It was fascinating for everyone who listened. Gulab passionately revealed how he came to be revived:

> *I found myself in a large gathering of saints, and the Holy Prophet Muhammad (uwbp) and Baba Tajuddin were present. Baba Tajuddin requested the Holy Prophet (uwbp) to bring me back into the world, to which he replied that someone taken from this world cannot be given life back. Baba Sahib then requested again in a special way to make an exception, and this time, the Holy Prophet (uwbp) accepted the request. In this way, I was given life back through his petition.*

This exception was made due to Baba Tajuddin's eccentric style and personality. He had reached the stage where his special requests were never refused.

Tea for a Dead Girl

The devotee had received an explicit instruction from his master to deliver the tea, so it was out of the question to abandon giving it regardless of whether she was determined to be dead or alive.

A *tawaif* named Girja Bai suffered from a dreadful disease that defied all treatments. Her condition showed she could succumb any time soon, so she resorted to meeting Baba Tajuddin. She was camped in the woods not far from where Tajuddin would often be found sitting so that he could reach her easily. Unfortunately, as it seemed, Dr. Kashinath's men found her dead in her tent. They reported to the doctor, who then sent a messenger to Baba Tajuddin.

While the messenger was on his way, Tajuddin sent tea for the girl through one of his staunch devotees. When their paths crossed, the messenger told the tea bearer to leave it when he was told it was being taken to the girl's tent. He told him she had just died. However, the devotee had received an explicit instruction from his master to deliver the tea, so it was out of the question to abandon giving it regardless of whether she was determined to be dead or alive. He proceeded, and when he entered the tent, he saw four ladies lamenting by her side. Despite the mourning, he went ahead, got on his knees and called on the girl to have the tea that had been sent to her. After the third call, he put the cup closer so she could sip it slowly and informed her it was from the one whom she had come to meet.

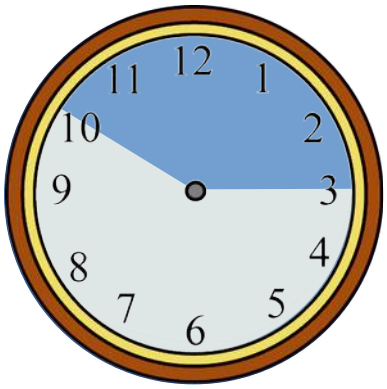
Hearing the name of Tajuddin, the girl sat up and asked where he was. Having regained awareness and, to the surprise of the wailing ladies, she immediately got up and came out of the tent. While she was looking at where he was sitting, Baba Tajuddin came over himself, led her back inside, and asked her to sing a devotional song. She rendered the song so melodiously that the dismal atmosphere quickly turned into an occasion for joy and celebration. News of this one *karaamat* alone spread far and wide. Girja Bai was not only cured of the disease with no sign of it ever having afflicted her, but she lived for many more years till she died a natural death.

The Sleeping Singer

They quietly waited in anticipation, with faith in the master's words. Surji opened her eyes, awoke, and sat up at three o'clock the following morning... There was great jubilation all around.

A professional singer named Surji often sang during Baba Tajuddin's public gatherings. She was famous for her exquisitely sweet voice, and she loved to entertain Baba Tajuddin. One day, she fell seriously ill. No treatment worked to restore her health. Instead, her condition worsened until those around her were certain that she had expired and her soul had departed. They arranged for her death certificate before the matter could be brought to Baba Tajuddin's attention.

When Ranga Rao Babu heard this news, he went over and laid her on the floor in preparation for her funeral rites, as per Hindu custom. Then, he went straight to inform Baba Tajuddin, who became visibly irritated upon hearing the news. He got up and said, "You're misinformed. She's alive and will get up soon; otherwise, who else will sing for us? She's only sleeping. Tell her relatives not to disturb her body."



These words were uttered at ten o'clock at night. As Baba Tajuddin had instructed, the relatives did not disturb her body. They quietly waited in anticipation, with faith in the master's words. Surji opened her eyes, awoke, and sat up at three o'clock the following morning. When news spread that Surji had come back to life, there was great jubilation all around. It became the talk of the town for several days. People would say, "Tajuddin Baba can raise the dead". This was a *karaamat* that caused one of the greatest sensations in Nagpur and beyond.

The Disheartened Man

He was greatly disappointed. Soon after leaving, it appeared that the man had died... Three days passed as the man who had come with hope was left lying outside and lay motionless... The man awoke, got up, and started walking off.

A man once came to Waki with the expectation that he would get healed by Baba Tajuddin. He suffered from a particular disease and was hopeful that Baba Sahib would be able to do something to relieve him of it.

However, Baba Tajuddin did not pay the man any attention when he came to him. He was greatly disappointed. Soon after leaving, it appeared that the man had died. Perhaps it was due to being so disheartened or the disease, or it was a combination of both. For some reason better known to the saint, Baba Sahib advised everyone not to touch or bury the man.

Three days passed as the man who had come with hope was left lying outside and lay motionless. Then, on the fourth day, Baba Sahib came to the spot where he lay and looked towards the sky. He then came back to lightly strike the man. After that, he ordered the dead man, "Get up. How long will you remain asleep?"

Onlookers were waiting in anticipation to see what would happen. Previously, they thought the man had died and were unsure why their master had told them not to touch or bury his body. However, when he ordered the man to get up, they were excited because they thought they were going to witness another miracle in which a dead person was going to be brought back alive.

That is exactly what happened. The man awoke, got up, and started walking off. However, the man had walked away before anyone could get a chance to ask him what, if anything, had happened during the past few days or about his condition. Perhaps he was still disheartened, had no track of the missing time, and didn't remember anything himself?

Kicked Back to Life

He then kicked the calf, which people could see was dead, and lo and behold, the calf stood up alive and well.

Among the *karamaat* of Baba Tajuddin witnessed by many were curing people of all kinds of illnesses. It included bringing the dead back to life, not only human beings revived through Baba Tajuddin's blessings, but also animals. One of his devotees was Ram Ghulam Pande of Jail Road. The story of how he became a devotee involves one such instance.

Ram Ghulam was fond of raising buffaloes. Once, he bought a fine buffalo of very good breed from Punjab. He had high hopes that one day, the new buffalo would give birth to a fine offspring. It was not long before the buffalo gave birth to a fine calf, but soon afterwards, it died for an unknown reason. Ram Ghulam felt very much dejected by this loss.

Seeing the man so depressed, one of his neighbours advised him to take the dead calf to a Muslim saint named Baba Tajuddin, who lived at the palace in Sakardara. He considered it unwise to take a dead calf in the hope of having it revived, but he decided to try this nonetheless. After all, he had nothing to lose since the calf was already dead.

As Ram Ghulam approached the crowd outside the palace with the dead calf in his hands, he saw the saint's *baggi* come through toward him. Baba Tajuddin came off, headed straight to the man, and made him put it down. He then kicked the calf, which people could see was dead, and lo and behold, the calf stood up alive and well. Leaving the crowd stunned, Baba Tajuddin hastily departed in his *baggi*. Grateful for what the saint had done for him, Ram Ghulam became a devotee from that day on.

The Pyre that Remained Unlit

The couple were overjoyed at the birth, but the joy quickly turned to sorrow when the child fell seriously ill and died three days later... The couple's patience and faith in Babaji paid off, so the pyre remained unlit. It did not need to be set on fire after all.

A Hindu man from Gujrat, newly stationed at the Nagpur Railway Station as the station master, came to know about Baba Tajuddin dealing with people's various problems in the city. So, he decided to try his own luck, given that he was childless for many years. Before he even described his concern, Baba Tajuddin told him, "*Jaa, Tajuddin ne ek beta diya tujhko* (Go, Tajuddin has granted you a child)". A child was born to him nine months later. The couple were overjoyed at the birth, but the joy quickly turned to sorrow when the child fell seriously ill and died three days later.

People were ready to help the couple by making the necessary preparations for the child's cremation, but the couple wanted to be left alone. The man insisted that their child was granted by Baba Tajuddin so the saint himself would restore him to life. The people considered the couple to have gone insane by avoiding the cremation, so they tried to take charge of the situation and proceeded to prepare a pyre. As they placed the child onto the funeral pyre, the couple covered themselves over the baby in an attempt to prevent them from setting it on fire. The man kept telling them to leave them alone and let Baba Tajuddin do his job. They were not willing to back off and let their child be cremated.

Babaji arrived on the scene at this moment, to the couple's relief. His presence was a surprise to the people and the couple, too, because no one had informed him yet about their child's death. The people moved back to let the saint come forward. He held the child against his chest and lightly tapped his back, saying, "*Kaese dewaane ha re log, zinda isko jalaane le jaate* (How foolish these people are that they were going to burn you alive)". As he kept tapping, the child sprang to life moments later and began to be playful and said, "*Mere Tajuddin ne diya, abhi waapis aane ka time nay aya* (My Tajuddin granted me; otherwise, it wasn't time to return)". The couple's patience and faith in Babaji paid off, so the pyre remained unlit. It did not need to be set on fire after all.

The Sixth Child

Baba Bastaan revealed that he was that sixth child who was brought back from the dead. Baba Bastaan was fortunate to have experienced two major miracles of Baba Tajuddin.

Baba Tajuddin brought many dead people to life. Baba Bastaan recalled before a group of people gathered around him that his father had several children who all died soon after their birth. After five babies were lost this way, his mother resolved that they would present the sixth child in Baba Tajuddin's lap in the hope that he would be saved. When they did this, the baby was fine up until he was with the saint in what later became Tajabad. However, Babaj Tajuddin had to leave for Sakardara for some important task, and the baby died soon after he left.

The parents were grieved, lamenting the fact that Babaji had to leave, putting their baby at risk. They gave their child *ghusl*, wrapped him in a burial cloth, and waited for Babaji to return. Much time had passed. The people became concerned that they were waiting too long to bury the baby. As the couple picked up their baby to bury it, news came that Babaji was returning very soon. When the master arrived, he took the baby from them, placed it on the flat ground, and ordered him to get up, saying, "*Uth re, chal mere saath* (Get up and come with me)". So saying, the baby immediately came to life. Baba Tajuddin turned to the couple and asked them to leave their child with him, promising, "*Jeeta rahega, khaata rahega* (He will live and eat)". Baba Bastaan revealed that he was that sixth child who was brought back from the dead.

Baba Bastaan was fortunate to have experienced two major miracles of Baba Tajuddin. One was a case of levitation and the other of teleportation. He was present in the *baggi* with his master when the carriage flew [see When the Carriage Flew], and he was taken across an overflowing river once in a single stride and instant. Baba Tajuddin had already crossed over, and when he saw that Bastaan was still on the other side, he called him over, shouting, "*Aare Bastaan, aaja* (Come over Bastaan, come)". Bastaan was unable to accomplish the same feat, so Baba Tajuddin came back in a flash, took hold of his hand, and teleported with him across the river.

Life-Giving Water

He opened his mouth and drank the tea as if it was life-giving water... Within one week, Inder recovered fully from his illness.

A clerk at the municipal office in Nagpur named Govinda had a son, Inder, who was very ill-mannered and suffered from bouts of drowsiness. When Inder's condition became intolerable, and there was little hope of making him live a normal life again, Govinda took his son to Sakardara to serve Baba Tajuddin. For two days, Baba Sahib did not pay any attention to the child. On the third day, however, he stood suddenly at his side and asked for a cup of tea. After taking two sips, he told Inder to "drink this tea".

Nagpur municipal office

Inder was not fully conscious at the time, so he was unable to reply. Babaji repeated the instruction, but Inder was still not in a condition to say or do anything. Upon instructing Inder to drink the tea for the third time in a more majestic manner and putting the cup closer to his mouth, Inder suddenly regained full awareness. He opened his mouth and drank the tea as if it was life-giving water. He drank the whole cup, stood up, and behaved as normal.

Within one week, Inder recovered fully from his illness. Not only was he completely healthy, but his behaviour improved as well. By spending time in Baba Sahib's company, he became a very obedient and well-mannered young lad. At the end of the week of treatment, Govinda sought permission from Baba Sahib to take his son back home. His request was granted. Inder returned with a new lease of life. From now on, he lived like a normal, healthy, and respectful son.

The Infatuated Jinn

The jinn's power had yet to be seriously challenged... Not long after the first visit, the jinn disappeared, and her illness was eradicated.

There once lived a beautiful princess in a village in Jodhpur. Her name was Afzal Begum, but other villagers called her '*Baji*' (elder sister). She was married to a respected man named Abdul Hameed Qureshi. As per her daily routine, one day, she went to fetch sweet water from a nearby stream accompanied by her handmaids. The stream was known in the area as '*Baji ka Talaab*'. While returning this time, she suddenly fainted for no apparent reason.

Baji regained consciousness, but by the time she got back, it was apparent to everyone that she was incredibly sick. Many treatments were given to her, both medical and spiritual, but she could not be cured. Not only that, but no one could understand what the actual problem was. Abdul Hameed spared no effort in trying to get his wife cured. He was a very religious and pious person himself. He was also acquainted with some holy persons. One spiritual healer told him that his wife was infatuated by an *aseb* (lascivious jinn) and that it would be necessary to perform an exorcism to get rid of it. Great, venerable ones made the attempt, but the jinn threatened all of them with dire consequences for the lady if they proceeded any further.

When Afzal Begum's anguish could not be stopped, and the jinn's power had yet to be seriously challenged, Abdul Hameed became frantic. He intensified his efforts to have his wife cured. He tried diverse treatments together, but there was still no change. Over the passage of time, he came to know about Baba Tajuddin in Nagpur, so he took his wife along in one more attempt. After gazing in the lady's direction and appearing to be dealing with some unseen entity, Baba Tajuddin ordered her to stay behind for a few days for the treatment to continue. Not long after the first visit, the jinn disappeared, and her illness was eradicated. After two months, she was then allowed to return to her village.

The Crippled Manager

Baba Tajuddin's words made an impact. They provoked the man to get up, and he did... [He] was eternally grateful for the restored ability to walk.

One day, a crippled but wealthy manager came to Sakardara from Delhi. As a Marwari, he was a successful businessman. He had a serious deformity, however, that crippled his ability to walk. His legs were no more than useless appendages. He came to Sakardara to meet Baba Tajuddin in the hope of becoming able to walk again.

Due to his disability, the manager had to crawl at times, though he had assistants with him. For the last part of the journey to meet Baba Tajuddin, he chose to crawl as he approached the spot where the saint was seen sitting. Baba Tajuddin was in a restless mood at the time. When the disabled man came near, he got up and kicked him. He said, "You buffalo, do you play tricks with me? Run away."

The manager's hopes were dashed. He did not see how it could be possible to be healed by someone who showed no care or concern. He was also deeply upset because he did not come all the way from another city to be taunted this way and humiliated by a scornful remark. Besides, he considered it a wholly unwelcome gesture. The manager was emotionally distraught further when Baba Tajuddin added, "Don't you hear me? I will kill you if you don't obey. I say run, or else I will beat you."

Baba Tajuddin showed no sign of calming down. The manager was regretting having come. Just then, Baba Tajuddin's words made an impact. They provoked the man to get up, and he did. The manager immediately ran from the spot to the wonder of all onlookers. The manager was crippled no more. As this realisation dawned on him, he forgot about all the harsh words Baba Tajuddin used and was eternally grateful for the restored ability to walk.

Only Lentils to Give and Eat

By simply undertaking this role and carrying out this act, the lady became well... like the old lady, he too, was completely well.

An old lady who became very ill was once given a duty by Baba Tajuddin to distribute lentils among the local population when he visited a certain village. Another person paid for the supplies. Her duty was only to distribute the packages. By simply undertaking this role and carrying out this act, the lady became well.

Soon, however, she became unwell again in spite of fulfilling her duty to distribute all the lentils given to her, so she went to meet Baba Tajuddin. Although satisfied that she had indeed fulfilled her duty, leaving not a single lentil behind, he instructed her to continue distributing more lentils in other areas as well. In this way, she recovered from her illness. His exact words were:

> *Barre khilaate to theek hojaate. You will get well by feeding others.*

In a separate case, Baba Tajuddin prescribed lentils to eat for the seriously ill son-in-law of Mathura Prasad of Amravti, who was teased by his Hindu brethren for associating with a Muslim saint. His wife also taunted him for mentioning the saint's *karamaat*, whereas their own daughter was on the verge of becoming widowed. Mathura Prasad took his son-in-law on the next bus to Nagpur and vowed not to show his face if he did not recover. Not wanting to miss out on what might happen, the rest of the family and doctors accompanied them to Sakardara.

The man presented the patient before Baba Tajuddin and also mentioned the issue of honour at stake. Baba Tajuddin grabbed his hand, let it go with a jerk, and then prescribed for the patient to be given only boiled rice with lentils. The doctors found it amusing that a dysentery patient was being prescribed this common food instead of medicine when he could not even drink water properly. Contrary to their negative expectations, the son-in-law responded well to Baba Tajuddin's diet plan, and after demanding the same in the evening, like the old lady, he too, was completely well by the next morning. After his recovery, he joined his father-in-law to serve Baba Tajuddin.

No Longer Disabled

Baba Tajuddin instructed her to stand, this time more majestically, whereupon she jerked and stood up straight.

One day, a man named Isa Khan brought some food for Baba Tajuddin and presented it before him. However, Baba Tajuddin did not want to have a meal at that time, so he told Isa to wait till he met a certain friend and assured him he would eat it afterwards. Hearing this, Isa left the food for Baba Tajuddin to eat later, and he left the residence to go and sit on a bridge some distance away.

Moments later, a woman from the Jhansi caste passed by carrying a girl who was handicapped in her hands and feet. The woman was heading toward Baba Tajuddin's residence, and he stood there waiting for her to arrive. He took hold of the girl's shawl and ordered her to stand. She could not reply. She just sat there. He instructed her again to stand, this time more sternly. Due to the fear that Baba Tajuddin's words instilled in her, she attempted to stand but could not do so and fell down.

For the third time, Baba Tajuddin instructed her to stand, this time more majestically, whereupon she jerked and stood up straight. He then asked her to accompany him, left that spot, and went inside his residence. The girl walked behind Baba Tajuddin of her own accord without much difficulty. She stayed in Sakardara for a few days until she was able to walk fully and normally before returning to her own place. She was no longer disabled.

Ending of a Persistent Cough

To his further amazement, Tukaram's persistent cough ended as soon as he ate what Baba Tajuddin gave him by hand.

A most obstinate and persistent type of cough afflicted a man named Tukaram so badly that it deprived him of a peaceful life for 30 long years. It troubled him every day and did not spare him during his sleep either. His friendly boss, a *seth*, advised him to seek the blessing of a saint in Waki Woods. He did not take this advice seriously but eventually agreed, and so they went off together to meet him.

While the two were waiting for their turn to meet Baba Tajuddin, Tukaram suddenly had an impulse to serve tea for the saint. He poured the tea in an exquisite silver tumbler, which the Seth had brought with him only for his own personal use. With the tumbler in his hand, he headed for the saint's room. The Seth objected to the tea being taken in a costly tumbler for fear of losing it. However, Tukaram's resolve to take the tea in this manner did not waver.

When Tukaram was only some yards away from the saint's abode with Tajuddin inside and not visible to him, he heard a voice ask him, "Why bring the tea in that tumbler?" Tukaram marvelled at the saint's knowledge. He proceeded inside and begged him to accept the humble offering. Baba Tajuddin accepted the tea and, while drinking it, told the man, "If only you had brought this tea 30 years ago, you would not have suffered so much all these years with that persistent cough".

Tukaram was convinced of the saint's omniscience. Whilst he remained stunned, Baba Tajuddin took a pinch of dust and asked him to eat it with the assurance that, "You'll be alright after eating this". To his further amazement, Tukaram's persistent cough ended as soon as he ate what Baba Tajuddin gave him by hand. It was the first time in 30 years he was relieved of the cough, and he was able to perform his duties undisturbed and enjoy sound sleep. The *seth* who initially led him to get cured was also glad that he had given him the right advice.

An Amulet for Diabetes

The officer had heard enough about Baba Tajuddin that he knew very well what it was for... From then on, the officer had no sign of diabetes at all. His sugar levels were normal.

An English army officer suffered from diabetes, due to which he was extremely worried. When he was sent to Hindustan, it so happened that he was stationed in Nagpur, where the great Baba Tajuddin lived. Over the course of some days, he heard about Baba Tajudidn's miracles and other exploits from his friends and acquaintances. Hearing them made him very eager to meet the Muslim saint in person. In fact, he was infatuated before he had even met the saint. He considered himself to be privileged to be posted in such a place where such a great holy man lived.

Not long after being stationed in Nagpur, the officer set off to meet Baba Tajudidn in Waki. He entered the place where Baba Tajuddin was staying at the time and paid his respects. Thereupon, the master gave him the dried portion of a blade of grass before he had the chance to mention his ailment and concern. The officer had heard enough about Baba Tajuddin that he knew very well what it was for. Also, he was familiar with the custom of amulets, so he folded it and kept it on him as one. He treated it as a special gift from a man of God, as that is exactly what it was.

From then on, the officer had no sign of diabetes at all. His sugar levels were normal, and he was happy to be leading a normal life again. He was grateful to have been posted in Nagpur and be relieved from diabetes. He was even more so grateful to have met such a great person who healed many people from various ailments and diseases.

Saved from the River

He then saw the boy floating with his hands raised high just like his spiritual master,... and as if he was being brought in his direction by someone against the strong flow of the current.

Once, an 11-year old boy named Azizuddin accompanied Baba Tajuddin close to a river, which was overflowing at the time. He often strolled along the Leaving the company and safety of his master; he went along with some other boys to the banks of this river. He accidentally lost his foothold and was soon seen struggling in the ferocious water. Unable to swim, he cried out for Baba Tajuddin to help.

When Azizuddin started crying for help, Babaji was eating with his devotees. No one except the saint could hear him at first. He quickly gave up eating and rushed over to help the boy who was drowning. By the time the crowd gathered, the boy was carried a long distance away by the strong current in the fast-flowing river.

Kanhan river bank where Baba Tajuddin often strolled (behind Maryam Bibi's shrine), present-day view)

Standing by the side of the river, Baba Tajuddin raised both his hands high above his head and asked people to help. Nobody dared to move forward to go into the flooded river due to the risk to their own life. With some persuasion, three of them ventured into it but returned unsuccessfully. The boy had floated too far down the river. Baba Sahib then instructed one *faqeer* to go into the river and assured him of spiritual assistance.

The *faqeer* boldly moved forward and dived straight into the river. He later recalled that he was swept away, but he then saw the boy floating with his hands raised high just like his spiritual master had raised his hands, and as if he was being brought in his direction by someone against the strong flow of the current. Eventually, he was able to get hold of the boy and take him to safety, where the others were waiting.

The New Resident in Town

When Baba Tajuddin came out of his place, he was well aware of the new resident in town... He fed the boy a few morsels with his own hands, and gave him water to drink.

There was once a young boy who was unable to move any of his limbs. His handicap made him rely completely on his parents to take care of him. His parents took him to be treated in many places, but it was all to no avail. Finally, they abandoned him in Sakardara one early morning after they had lost all hope. They were very sad at doing this, but they were poor and feeble themselves, and there was nothing more they could do for their son. Little did they know that they had left him in an area where there lived a compassionate saint, Baba Tajuddin.

Many people passed by the boy struggling to move about in the streets, but no one took much notice except for a few who dropped a coin or two, thinking he was a beggar. He could neither speak nor cry. However, when Baba Tajuddin came out of his place, he was well aware of the new resident in town. He immediately got ready and went straight over to welcome him. He fed the boy a few morsels with his own hands and gave him water to drink.

Baba Tajuddin then asked for more food to be given to the boy, whereupon many people fed him in turns over the next half hour as an honour. Another volunteered to look after the boy. Gradually, the kind care and treatment he received led to his full recovery until he was able to fend for himself. He remained in service of his spiritual father. He was particularly keen to take good care of young children, and especially disabled visitors before Baba Tajuddin healed them, too.

A Court of Blessings

The court of Baba Tajuddin was for dispensing mercy and blessings. Countless people from all backgrounds and walks of life benefited from him, and some continue to do so today.

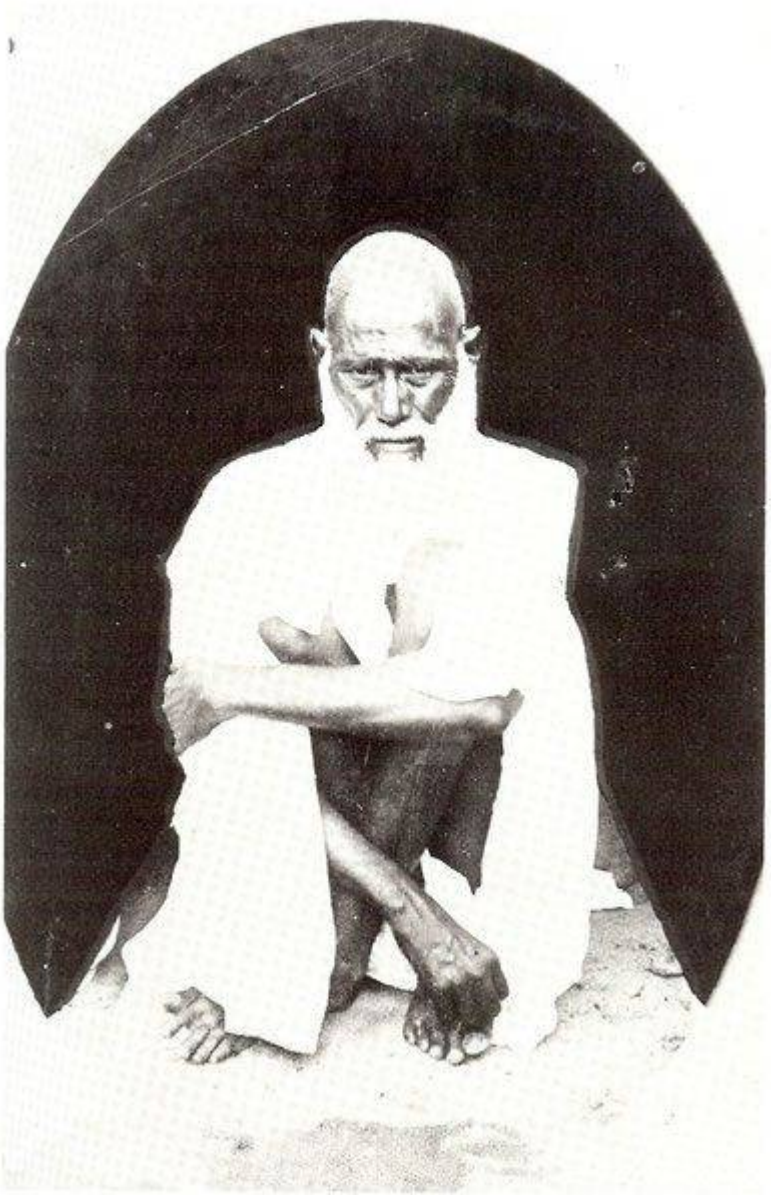
Sometimes, it so happened that Baba Tajuddin had to endure difficulties and hardships for the sake of serving others, and occasionally, someone would utter some harsh words. The devotees present felt bad whenever this happened. They would feel pitiful for their master. In serious situations where someone misbehaved or was rude or vicious, the thought would arise in some devotees to curse that person. Even in these situations, Baba Tajuddin would tell them:

Nako Hazrat! Hamara darbar bad dua ka nahi.

Don't think like that, Sir! Our court is not for cursing (but for blessings).

Everyone who came to Baba Tajuddin was entitled to be assisted and received the saint's benevolence, regardless of whether their demeanour was good or bad. Being a descendant of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (uwbp), it was befitting that the court of Baba Tajuddin, the magnanimous, was for dispensing mercy and blessings. Countless people from all backgrounds and walks of life benefited from him, and some continue to do so today. No one returns without receiving what they want or being helped in some way or other.

During Baba Tajuddin's earthly life, some people came to be cured of otherwise incurable diseases [see The Gift of a Great Voice]. His visitors included those struggling financially and with livelihood concerns [see Two Trays of Chironji], parents concerned for their children [see One Stern Look and a Book], low-case people [see The Tiffin Hanging on a Tree], and the childless [see The Son of a Childless Couple, No More Taunting and Laddus for Two Ladies]. All of them were equally blessed in Baba Tajuddin's court.



An authentic photo of Baba Tajuddin of Nagpur

The Milky Well

Babaji held the baby boy... and rubbed the child's thumb on the ground. Thereupon, fresh water began sprouting... the water became a little milky over time.

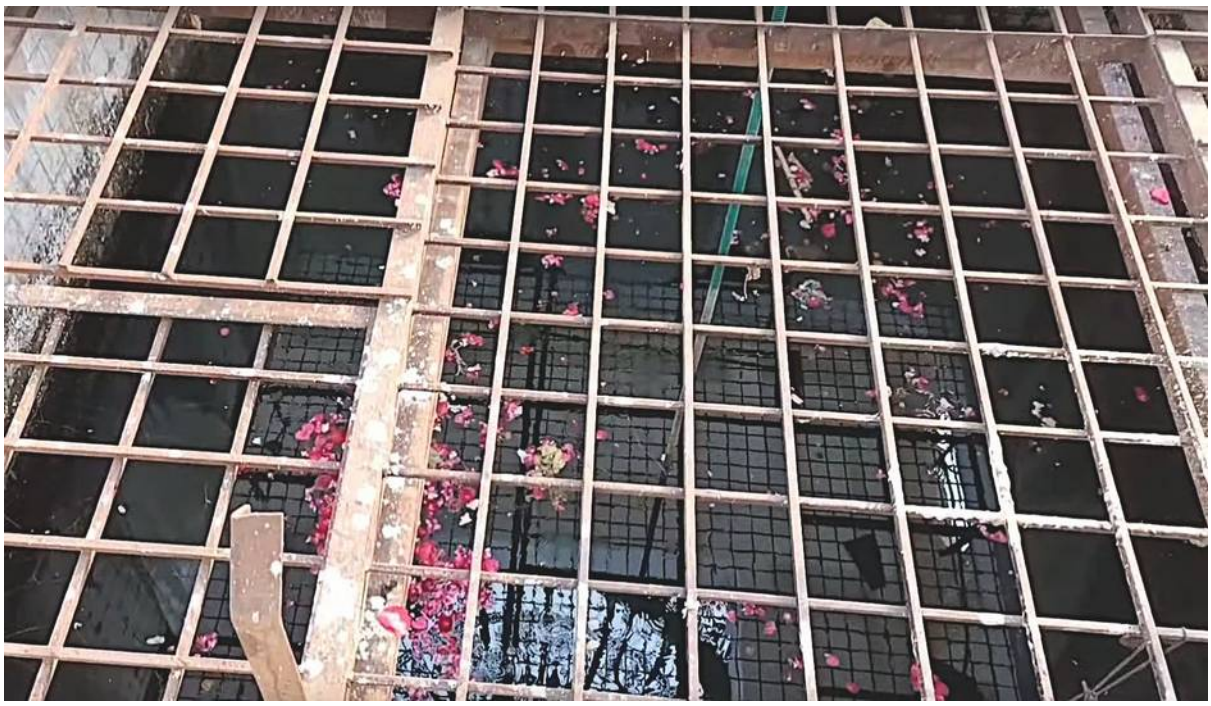
During one of the many routine rounds that Baba Tajuddin made of Nagpur, he was passing through an area that would later become Tajabad [see A Hut in Tajbagh]. It was a very hot day, so his companions included men with all the tools required to cut grass and dig the earth, as they were prepared in case their master decided to stay somewhere that needed clearing or levelling. They had extra water pitchers with them, too, but they were soon depleted and emptied, which made them very concerned.

It so happened that a lady approached Baba Tajuddin. She was carrying her six-month-old grandson, who was crying uncontrollably. The grandmother and child were both very thirsty. The companions did not have any more water left to give to her, and they were in a place where there was no water anywhere nearby. The area they were passing through was scarcely populated in those days. The grandmother presented her crying grandchild to Babaji so that he would do something about the desperate situation, as she knew he had miraculous powers.

Baba Tajuddin was equally concerned for the baby and his grandmother, so he decided to do something to not only quench their thirst but implement a permanent solution to the problem of water scarcity in the area. Babaji held the baby boy, took him over to a certain spot after psychically scanning the area for water, and rubbed the child's thumb on the ground.

Thereupon, fresh water began sprouting. The men with tools quickly encircled that spot to create a pool. Needless to say, the baby stopped crying and drank water, as did his grandmother, and the companions refilled their pitchers. Future travellers also benefitted from the new source of water.

When Baba Tajuddin would pass through the same area again, he often put his feet in the pool. By doing so, the water became a little milky over time. It was a relief for all those who passed by, especially on hot days. This source of milky water was also used for healing incurable diseases, especially issues with *aseb* jinns. The companions dug deeper and turned it into a well at the time of construction of their master's darbar. Since then, the well has become known as the 'Milky Well' (*dudiya khuwan*) and is now within the Taj Dargah compound.



The milky well in Tajabad (present times)

The Gift of a Great Voice

Deshpande's voice was very much admired by those who listened to him sing... It was Baba Tajuddin who healed him and also gave him the gift of a great voice.

A Hindu Brahmin family was among the many who came from afar to visit Baba Tajuddin one day to find a cure for a health problem that they were unable to treat elsewhere. The son, Madhav Rao Deshpande, had a long-term illness since he was very young. His parents tried many treatments to no avail. Upon hearing about a Muslim saint in Nagpur with miraculous healing powers, his mother brought him before Baba Tajuddin in the Sakardara palace. As many people were gathered there already, and because she thought they might be treated differently, they sat quietly in a corner to wait patiently for their turn.

A short while later, when Baba Tajuddin came to know about the Brahmin guests, he got up and came over to the lady himself in a state of majesty. He took hold of her son and began uttering some words that no one around who heard it could understand what was being said. He then put something into his mouth and declared him as a parrot of God. This brought about a noticeable change in Deshpande. From that day on, his illness gradually got less and less severe until he was fully cured.

At the age of eight, Deshpande's voice was very much admired by those who listened to him sing. He was able to make tunes that even other professionals couldn't. As he grew older, he became a master of classical music. He also obtained a doctorate, so he became known as Dr. Deshpande. Importantly, he never forgot that it was Baba Tajuddin who healed him and also gave him the gift of a great voice. He remained forever grateful and devoted, and was one of those who noted some *karamaat* of his spiritual master, such as the experience of Dr. Pownaskar [see From One Saint to Another].

Two Trays of Chironji

"In two trays, everything is there... so go now and reopen your shop." ...Comforted by Baba Tajuddin's words... he restarted his business with complete faith... Very soon, his business flourished.

One day, while Baba Tajuddin's uncle, Abdul Rahman, came to visit him, a remorseful man who had committed theft came and sat down before him. The man looked very nervous. No one except Baba Tajuddin knew he was a thief. He kept rehearsing in his mind to admit he had committed theft at a confectionery shop and to express his regret, but he wanted it to be kept secret and to be saved from punishment. Knowing his silent request, Baba Tajuddin turned towards him and said: "Go now! You have done what you have done."

A short while after the thief left, another man presented himself before Baba Tajuddin. He was the confectioner whose shop was looted. He told the saint about this incident, complained that his livelihood had been taken away, and requested his assistance. After hearing what this second man had to say, Baba Sahib said to him, "You may go! In two trays, everything is there. The thief has done what he did, and your work will also be done. So go now and reopen your shop."

The confectioner returned to his shop and looked around. All the money and goods were stolen, but this time, he noticed that two trays of *chironji* (cuddapah almond) seeds remained. Comforted by Baba Tajuddin's words that "everything is there" in those two trays, he restarted his business with complete faith. That whole day, the *chironji* kept selling without the quantity being reduced. Very soon, his business flourished again, this time under divine protection, so he performed much better financially than before.

One Stern Look and a Book

He gave the lad just one stern look that changed his life for the better... Baba Tajuddin then gave him a book, which captivated his interest... he engrossed himself in his studies.

A man named Som Sundaram, who was concerned for his children, once visited Baba Tajuddin whilst he happened to be staying with his family in Nagpur for some time. He was accompanied by his troublesome son, Madan Gopal, and his young daughter. He was worried because his son was not inclined to study, had a stubborn attitude much of the time, and deliberately irritated his mother. For Baba Tajuddin, just one stern look and a book are all that it took to put things in order.

When the man and his two children arrived and sat before Baba Tajuddin, the spiritual master gave the lad just one stern look that changed his life for the better. After bringing about this internal transformation in him, Baba Tajuddin then gave him a book, which captivated his interest. He then turned to his sister and assured her that "He will study well".

As it turned out, the boy was no longer stubborn, and he never irritated his mother anymore. More so, he became so inclined to study after reading the book given to him by Baba Tajuddin that from that day on, he engrossed himself in his studies, studied well, and eventually obtained a degree in medicine from England. After that, he returned to practice as an eye surgeon and treated many patients with vision-related disorders. Maybe it was not so much the book, though informative and captivating it was, but the piercing sight of the saint that made the actual impact.

The Tiffin Hanging on a Tree

"Bring me that food in the container that is hanging on the guava tree outside!"... Baba Tajuddin got up, went over to the guava tree, sat under it, and ate all that was inside the tiffin container.

It was Baba Tajuddin's routine that whenever someone would present food to him, he would eat a little from it and distribute the remainder to others present around him. People from all walks of life brought and presented all kinds of food. It also often happened that people would bring him food, knowing he had not eaten for many days, but he would not eat what they offered. It was unusual for Baba Tajuddin to eat the whole of what any single person offered.

Once, a poor Hindu lady sweeper from a low caste named Ganga Bai desired to prepare some food and present it to Baba Tajuddin. She had this desire in her for several days, but the fact that she was an untouchable *harijan* made it seem almost impossible to her. When she saw that she might just get a chance during a visit to the Sakardara palace, she saw many rich and wealthy people bringing food for Baba Tajuddin that same day. Her hopes were dashed. She thought it would be unwise to offer the small tiffin in their presence as no one would take it. Out of fear of refusal, she hung her tiffin container on a guava tree.

When the food was being served, Baba Tajuddin refused each and every offering. He did not even touch any of the containers put before him. The people were surprised, and the lady did not understand either why Baba Tajuddin was refusing such splendid offerings. She then heard Babaji say, "Bring me that food in the container that is hanging on the guava tree outside!"

No one other than Ganga Bai knew what food Baba Tajuddin was asking for, but when they went to the tree, they saw a container was indeed hanging from it. So, they took the container and presented it to Baba

Tajuddin. Ganga Bai did not tell anyone that she had put the container there. She just kept watching what was happening, astonished at why the master preferred her tiffin over the other, wider variety of offerings.

Baba Tajuddin got up, went over to the guava tree, sat under it, and ate all that was inside the tiffin container. Those around him began to inquire who had placed the tiffin container there and what was inside it to understand why their master liked it so much. The *harijan* lady was among the least expected to be the one. She could no longer keep it a secret. Reluctantly, she admitted that she was the one who brought the small tiffin and hung it on the tree in disappointment, in spite of her strong desire to offer Baba Tajuddin food one day. She was so overjoyed with happiness that she danced to express her feelings on that most memorable day of her life.

All Completed in Absence

The officer... praised him for performing his office work perfectly and in a timely manner. Everything was complete, and in order, for the time the Brahmin claimed to have been away.

A Brahmin who used to work in an office applied for four days' leave to be present in the service of Baba Tajuddin. When the four days given were over, he requested his master's permission to leave. Baba Tajuddin did not grant this permission for some reason, so the Brahmin remained for longer. When one week had passed, he asked his master about this matter, but Baba Tajuddin remained silent, and so the Brahmin remained for longer.

Baba Tajuddin eventually gave permission after one month had passed. The Brahmin hurriedly returned to his house, all the while concerned over what condition it might be in after one month. He was also expecting to be given a severe reprimand from his office. However, to the Brahmin's surprise, his family members did not express any unusual emotion, nor did they ask him to explain why he overstayed for one whole month. After having a bath and resting for a while, he asked his wife whether someone from the office asked about his whereabouts and why he was not coming to the office. To his surprise, yet again, his wife told him that no one called from his office to ask any such thing.

The wife then asked why he was so worried about his absence. The Brahmin explained that he asked for permission from Baba Tajuddin to leave after the four days granted to him by his office, but he was refused permission. He told her that he sought permission again after one week was over, but his request was refused, and he was only granted permission one month later. He told her how he felt strange that the

office made no enquiry, and that no members of his family asked why he took so long either. The wife thought he was joking in this matter, so she just told him to get ready soon to go to the office as the time was getting near.

When the Brahmin arrived at his office, no one asked about his absence nor expressed anything unusual over why he returned after a long time or so much as raised an eyebrow. This made the Brahmin even more astonished. He wanted to know why people were not bothered by his long absence, as it was unusual and unexpected for them to be lenient in such matters.

The Brahmin thought deeply about this matter as if he had asked Baba Tajuddin directly for an explanation. His astonishment was strengthened when an office attendant arrived. He only asked to be given a certain file, which he had to pass on to a senior officer without any other questions. Finding it strange, the Brahmin asked the attendant himself why there was no concern or complaint over his long absence. The attendant tried to assure him that it was only yesterday when he was given the file that he was being asked to return. The Brahmin could not believe it. He told the attendant that he was not in the office the day before and that, in fact, a whole month had passed since he last came to the office.

When news of this questioning reached the officer, he, too, assured the Brahmin that he had returned after the four days he was granted. He also praised him for performing his office work perfectly and in a timely manner. Everything was complete, and in order, for the time the Brahmin claimed to have been away.

Later, however, it transpired that people had seen the Brahmin in Sakardara as well as in the office. There was proof that he had been in both places during the past month. For this reason, the Brahmin himself, his family, and his office staff were all surprised in this matter.

With Him All the Time

It was now clear that Baba Tajuddin was with him all the time and only left when he failed to acknowledge his presence.

A low-paid officer named Ahmad Ali Shah from Nagina worked in the auctioning of insolvents' properties. When transferred to another office, he was charged with misappropriation of funds due to a deficit of 24 rupees. He did all he could to convince his superiors to avoid being reprimanded, but it was all in vain. The desperation led him to seek the intervention of many *faqeers* and *sadhus* over the course of one whole year. At this stage, someone advised him to seek the protection of Baba Tajuddin of Nagpur.

When Ahmad arrived in Nagpur, he immediately went over to the saint. On seeing him, Baba Tajuddin ordered him to stay. All he said was, "Stay!" So Ahmad stayed in Nagpur for four days, and when he asked for permission to leave on the fifth day, he was again told to "stay". A few days later, when he asked for the third time, Baba Tajuddin gave his permission to go home, saying: "Okay sir, I'm with you."

Although these words gave him some relief, Ahmad returned home full of apprehension because it had been well over a week since he departed from Nagina, and over a year, he had been wandering from one holy man to another. To his utter surprise, when he went inside his house, no one expressed any curiosity or asked where he had been for so long. It was as if he just returned from work as usual.

Having paid the coachman and seeing the money in his hands, his wife asked whether he had brought the earrings for her, which he had been promising for the past few days. The man denied making such a promise. He insisted he was returning after more than one year of wandering from one holy man to another. No one else in the house believed him either because they knew he had not been absent for any day during the past year and that he had indeed made the promise. Everyone was witness to him leaving every morning, returning home every evening, and chanting the names of God incessantly during the nights. This matter of claiming and denial almost

led to a quarrel until his wife mentioned the case of misappropriation was decided in his favour, and that he recently withdrew his pay. She reminded him it was then that he made the promise. The man could not make sense of his experience in light of what his family was also insisting.

The following day, Ahmad went to his office and again faced the same reaction. He was surprised no one asked where he had been for the past year. When he looked in the attendance register, he was bewildered to see his signature for all the days he was sure he was absent. Then, the senior officer called him. He was expecting he would be asked to explain his absences, but instead, the officer expressed his sympathy and regrets for the worry the case had caused him.

Ahmad remembered the parting words of Baba Tajuddin, "I'm with you". He thought perhaps it was he who had somehow been attending the office in his place and attending to the court affairs as well. After all, he knew that he himself did not have the ability to be present in two places simultaneously. In whatever manner Baba Tajuddin made it possible, he was grateful for all that he did for him. He wanted to express his gratitude in person, so he left once more for Nagpur.

When Ahmad had to change trains in Delhi, he met a man with a dog by his side. While exiting, the ticket inspector asked the stranger for his ticket. He pointed to Ahmad and said he was with him and that he had the tickets. Exasperated, Ahmad protested that he was alone and the stranger was not with him at all. He showed his own ticket and quickly boarded the train for Nagpur. He could not see the man or his dog around and did not know what became of them. Ahmad felt relieved, but when he reached the saint to greet him, Baba Tajuddin laughed and reminded him, "Did I not tell you that I'm with you? But at the Delhi railway station, you disowned me and broke off from my company."

Ahmad was shocked to learn that the man with the dog was none other than Babaji himself. He regretted his oversight and begged tearfully to be pardoned. It was now clear that Baba Tajuddin was with him all the time and only left when he failed to acknowledge his presence. Still, being full of compassion, Babaji accepted his pardon and comforted him with a smile. After all, he had come to express his gratitude.

Promoted from Black to Red

Baba Tajuddin's saying that the black-mouthed monkey will become red-mouthed described the promotion aptly, after all.

A devotee of Baba Tajuddin named Muhammad Abdul Aziz, also known as Nana Mian, had a friend who worked in Nagpur's police department. He was interested in serving Baba Tajuddin, so he went to meet the saint. Referring to his friend Ziaul-Haq, Baba Tajuddin told Nana Mian that "the black-mouthed monkey will become a red-mouthed one".

Nana Mian did not like this remark about his friend, but he kept silent. Within his own mind, though, he thought it was inappropriate to describe someone as a black and red-mouthed monkey. The remark made him wonder whether Baba Tajuddin really was insane after all and that it must be people who have made him seem pious.

It so happened that when the head constable returned to his native place of Raipur, a deputy superintendent police officer appointed Nana Mian's friend as his personal assistant. The sub-inspector was then sent for training in Sagar, and the friend was promoted to a police sub-inspector in his place. When he came to meet Nana Mian, he was wearing his new uniform. Previously, it was in black. Now, it was in red. He told his friend Nana Mian that Baba Tajuddin's prediction was correct. Baba Tajuddin's saying that the black-mouthed monkey will become red-mouthed described the promotion aptly, after all.

Nana Mian's admiration of Baba Tajuddin and devotion to him increased after hearing the news of his friend's promotion, seeing his uniform change from black to red, and hearing this explanation of Baba Saib's words. Both friends became strong devotees of Baba Tajuddin, and they gladly spent more time in his service from then on.

The Once Destitute Trader

He was instructed to go and sit in the bazaar. ..When about ten days had passed, the man had enough money to arrange his own stall and become a trader himself.

A debt-ridden man once decided to take along a *dhol* to play while extolling Baba Tajuddin's name and exalting his honour. He thought people would give him money for doing so. The master stopped him because the intention was misaligned with his action, saying:

> *Tabla hataado ji, Tajuddin ka shaan bataana maqsad nahi, bheek mangna maqsad ha. Bheek nahi mangte ji, jao ji, jharu kashi karo.*
>
> *Remove the drum. The purpose is not to extol Tajuddin but to beg, and one must not beg. Go and sweep instead.*

Similarly, another man once came, expecting to gain a financial blessing because he, too, was destitute. Babaji grabbed and raised his arms, saying, "God has given you these two arms. Go and strive like others to earn your livelihood". The man said he had no money to invest, so he was instructed to go and sit in the bazaar. Although disappointed, he went and sat quietly near a grain seller's stall. The trader noticed him and approached him after a while to ask about his condition. The poor man told him that Baba Sahib instructed him to sit there, so the trader let him sit nearby and continued his business. The market rush increased as the time was drawing near to closing. The trader was having difficulty managing his stall, so he instinctively asked the poor man to come over and assist him. He promised to pay him for his assistance.

A short while later, another nearby trader experiencing the same difficulty in handling customers also called the man over and promised to pay him for his assistance. Both traders gave the man what they promised. He spent half on buying grains and other necessities and kept the remaining half in cash. Baba Tajuddin told him to keep going and do the same for a few more days. When about ten days had passed, the man had enough money to arrange his own stall and become a trader himself. The once destitute trader now understood the importance and benefits of striving to earn one's livelihood.

A Leaf from a Jujube Tree

Baba Sahib plucked a leaf from the tree and gave it to the man. Abdul Lateef was quick to realise the sign he was given... He started his own business, procuring jujubes and their leaves.

A man named Abdul Lateef was struggling financially to make ends meet. A long time had passed, and he was unable to find any permanent work or secure a job. He tried a number of offers and self-employment options but could never gain a footing or did not have enough resources to establish himself. He was a breadwinner, and the rest of his household was equally worried. So, one day, he resolved to go and meet Baba Tajuddin after hearing about him from a friend and all sorts of things he did to help many people.

The man was hopeful that the saint would do something or bless him in some way that would improve his situation. He was not looking for any miraculous formula or a large bag of money given to him freely out of thin air but still something unexpected or an opportunity he could work with. He thought perhaps a sign or indication of what to do would be sufficient. Abdul Lateef walked all the way from his village that day as he did not have any form of transport and could not afford to hire one.

It so happened that Baba Tajuddin was standing beside a jujube tree when Abdul Lateef reached him. Before the man could say anything about why he had come or what he needed, Baba Sahib plucked a leaf from the tree and gave it to the man. Abdul Lateef was quick to realise the sign he was given and looking out for.

When Abdul Lateef returned to his village, he started his own business, procuring jujubes and their leaves with the one leaf he had been given. It not only improved his financial situation, but he became an immensely successful trader and expanded the variety of his herbal stock. The village benefitted, too, due to the health benefits of the fruit and its leaves. Truth be known, it was not a coincidence that Baba Tajuddin was found beside a jujube tree at that moment. He was intentionally standing there waiting for Abdul Lateef to arrive so he could give him that leaf as a sign of which line of work to pursue and benefit the village community.

The Formula for Making Gold

When the man did as he was instructed... It worked. He was able to transform copper into gold... However, he was unable to make more gold because Baba Tajuddin had not told him the secret.

A man named Abdur Razzaq had an uncle who was very interested in alchemy, the science of changing ordinary metals into gold. He wanted to get hold of the formula for making gold. He had already spent a huge amount of money and many years in this attempt. One more final attempt led him to a saint in Nagpur who worked real wonders and transformed people into gold.

One day, unexpectedly, the uncle met a person who was an expert in alchemy. He was told about a shrub growing on the wall of a 200-year-old house in Nagpur and that it can be used as a denser type of vermillion, which can then be used to polish copper to transform it into gold. Vermillion is a bright red pigment formed by the chemical reaction between mercury and sulphur.

Abdur Razzaq's uncle went from his village to Nagpur to find this old house. He found it in a dilapidated condition and saw the shrub on one of its walls. Since he was in Nagpur and knew about a wise old sage who lived there, he decided to seek his blessings before returning to fix his furnace for another attempt at making gold. This time, his hope of being successful was higher. The sage was none other than the glorious Baba Tajuddin.

The man reached Sakardara and appeared before Baba Tajauddin to pay his respects. Babaji was on his *baggi* at the time, and around his neck was a garland of flowers with leaves of sweet basil. He plucked one leaf, gave it to the man, and advised him to add it to the vermillion mixture.

When the man did as he was instructed by adding the powdered leaf to the vermillion obtained from the shrub, it made the vermillion richer. He was now ready to

turn copper into gold. He tried the formula. It worked. He was able to transform copper into gold. He sold this gold in the bazaar and improved his circumstances. After this one attempt, however, he was unable to make more gold because Baba Tajuddin had not told him the secret of the sweet basil leaf he was given. No other leaf of the same kind worked to have the same effect, no matter how many he tried. Only the spiritual transformer of people into gold, metaphorically, had the secret ingredient and leaves capable of having the desired effect.

Baba Tajuddin wearing a garland of flowers

The Helpful Scrap of Paper

Babaji picked up a piece of paper, seemingly at random, handed it over to Fareed, and told him to give it to Idris, assuring him that he would gain admission if he showed it... The clerk saw the scrap and immediately confirmed that Idris would be granted admission.

A student of the Urdu-medium Anjuman High School, Muhammad Idris Patel, wanted to transfer to study at an English-medium school named Bishop Cotton School. Idris was a close relation of the headmaster Fareed Fiza, who was reluctant to assist in this matter by issuing a transfer certificate because it would not have gone down well if people came to know that he sent his own relation to another school. So, Fareed went to consult with Baba Tajuddin about how to handle this matter.

When Fareed met Baba Tajuddin, bits of newspapers were lying around. They had been used by guests to wrap and present food. Babaji picked up a piece of paper, seemingly at random, handed it over to Fareed, and told him to give it to Idris, assuring him that he would gain admission if he showed it. He said, "*Ye dekha dete, daakhla mil jaata* (Just show this to get admission)". Fareed did not think twice about the scrap piece of newspaper that looked as if it had probably been wrapped around some sweets. He took it straight over to the admissions office at the English medium school along with Idris. The clerk saw the scrap and immediately confirmed that Idris would be granted admission, asking him to come and start his classes the next morning.

Fareed was very surprised about this matter, as was Khwaja Rahbar Ali Shah Chishti Qadri, Idris' elder brother-in-law, when he heard what had happened. Although Fareed told him all the details, Khwaja Rahbar asked how it was possible to change schools when a transfer certificate was compulsory. In fact, the target school had a tough admissions policy, and it was very difficult to gain admission there, even for those with an authorised transfer certificate from another reputable school. Rahbar enquired what was on that scrap, but they were unable to find out. It didn't matter for Idris, though, as he started at his new school the next day. The certificate issued by Baba Tajuddin proved to be more than sufficient.

Back into this World

Baba Tajuddin took off his imaamah and put it on Idris' head. As soon as he did that, Idris was immediately put into the spiritually absorbed state. The experience made him more distant from his wife and children, as he now spent more time alone in the woods.

Idris did well at the school he gained admission to with the help of a scrap of paper given by Baba Tajuddin that served as a transfer certificate [see The Helpful Scrap of Paper]. When he left the English-medium school, he became an inspector, got married, and had children. It was some years later before he had another opportunity to meet Baba Tajuddin, who was spiritually absorbed at the time. Idris was concerned about being unable to talk to him.

Idris then paid a visit to Khwaja Gharib Nawaz's shrine in Ajmer Shareef with his family and Khwaja Rahbar. He thought to himself that he was privileged to be living in Nagpur, where a saint lived, but was concerned that the saint spent too much time in the absorbed state for him to engage with others.

When Khwaja Rahbar returned to Baba Tajuddin in Nagpur, the master looked at him and said, "*Kyun bhai, barre Hazrat se hamaari shikayat kardi?* (So, you complained about me to our respected elder, did you?)". Baba Tajuddin took off his imaamah and put it on Idris' head. As soon as he did that, Idris was immediately put into a spiritually absorbed state. The experience made him more distant from his wife and children, as he now spent more time alone in the woods.

When his wife complained to Fareed, he was equally concerned. He went to Baba Tajuddin to express his concern because Idris was a family man. Babaji said, "*Achha, woh haalat nai raygi, ja usko dunya waapis kardi hamne* (That state won't remain for long, so you may go now because we've brought him back into this world)". Idris, who was then in the woods somewhere, returned to his home immediately as soon as these words were said.

The Son of a Childless Couple

She gladly took it from him at once, as she knew her wish was going to be fulfilled... Some months later, they bore a son.

A young lady married to a senior sub-inspector named Qamaruddin was worried about being childless. Her husband was old and sterile, so it was impossible for them to bear children. She pleaded many times for him to meet Baba Tajuddin, but he always reminded her that doctors had declared it was impossible. This issue became a source of conflict in their marriage.

Eventually, Qamaruddin gave in to his wife's constant nagging to visit Baba Tajuddin in Waki Shareef. When he arrived in his presence, upon remotely perceiving the lady's yearning, Baba Tajuddin took off his garland, rubbed it all over his own body, and handed it over to her husband, all before he even had the chance to say anything. Qamaruddin took the garland, thanked Baba Tajuddin, and returned home.

When the wife asked what the saint said, he kept silent because Babaji had not said anything. Seeing what was in his hand, she then asked if Baba Tajuddin had given anything. He told her that the garland was all he gave. She gladly took it from him at once, as she knew her wish was going to be fulfilled. Her husband could not understand why she was so delighted with the garland. The lady took off all the petals in it, ground them, and made laddus out of them. The couple then ate those laddus together. Some months later, they bore a son.

When the sub-inspector's colleagues saw the father and son together, they asked how this was possible, as he was quite old and the boy was very young. Even stranger was seeing that the infant's face did not resemble his own. Qamaruddin told them the whole story. They reckoned some effervescence must have transferred into the child by the rubbing. The colleagues had not heard of Baba Tajuddin before this time, but one of them, Sayyad Zia-ul-Haqq, was so impressed that he requested Qamaruddin for ten days leave to meet the saint for himself.

No More Taunting

She started feeling that her request had been granted, and it was confirmed. She was no longer subjected to any more taunting after that... the lucky day came when Rekhta became a mother.

A lady from Khari village, Rekhta, was unable to conceive for a very long time after her marriage to Sumashwar Choray Sakin Tay. She was subjected to all kinds of taunting comments from her in-laws and other close relations. It became a burden, a source of unhappiness, and great distress for her. The couple underwent a full medical check-up and took medications, but it was all in vain. They also tried various mantras given to them and received *dam* (blessings via breath) from holy men. None of them worked, either. Then one day, a *buzurg* (respected elder) advised her to pay a visit to Baba Tajuddin in Nagpur.

It was the 27th of a month when the couple arrived in Baba Tajuddin's court, where his saintly *mureed* Maryam Bibi was also present. Many people came and went with full devotion. When their chance came, Rekhta expressed their wish for a child, and she was weeping as she made her request. The couple then left, after thanking both saints and returned home.

There was no more sadness on Rekhta while returning. Instead, she felt calm, relieved, and hopeful. A month later, she started feeling that her request had been granted, and it was confirmed. She was no longer subjected to any more taunting after that. With the blessings of Baba Tajuddin and Maryam Bibi, the lucky day came when Rekhta became a mother. This increased the couple's devotion to the bounteous saint in Nagpur.

Laddus for Two Ladies

He gave them each a laddu... and blessed them to have sons... As per God's divine will, Shantabai gave birth to a son nine months later, whereas Subhadrabai remained childless.

Two Hindu ladies from Amravati, whose names were Shantabai and Subhadrabai, had no children after more than twelve years of marriage. One day, they decided to pay their respects to Baba Tajuddin to be blessed in the hope that God would grant them a child. Baba Tajuddin was lying down on the sands of the River Kanhan when they approached him.

He knew what they desired, so he gave them each a laddu sweet-ball after first eating a little of each himself in front of them. He prayed and blessed them to have sons. Shantabai ate the laddu, treating it as a blessing, but Subhadrabai secretly buried hers in the sand. Being a proud Hindu, she did not eat it because she did not take food eaten or tasted by a Muslim. Both ladies thanked Babaji and returned, but only one did so sincerely.

As per God's divine will, Shantabai gave birth to a son nine months later, whereas Subhadrabai remained childless. When the child was about two months old, the two ladies went to meet Babaji again to have the child blessed this time. Subhadrabai was reluctant to go but eventually agreed to accompany her friend after being assured they would request Babaji again. When they arrived, they were surprised to see him in exactly the same spot and position. Shantabai put her child at the saint's feet. Subhadrabai, feeling pitiful at not having had a child, fell at his feet and cried. She asked him, "Where is my child you promised I would have?"

Baba Tajuddin knew exactly what Subhadrabai did and why. He told her to search for her child beneath the sand while pointing to the precise location where she had hidden her laddu. Sincerely regretting her folly, Subhadrabai immediately sought repentance, and both ladies embraced Islam. As he was full of compassion, he accepted her repentance, prayed for her, and blessed her to also have a son. She was blessed a year later.

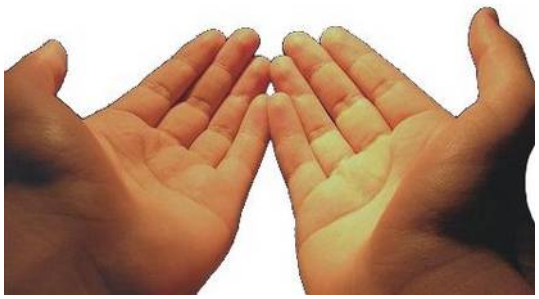
Strange Sounds and Ameen

They looked up and saw nothing unusual but could hear sounds of wailing screams as if someone was calling for help... A lad among the jinn had died, so the sounds they heard were of distress and mourning over his death.

One night, Baba Tajuddin was with a group of devotees in an open-air *mehfil*. Suddenly, they heard strange sounds coming from the skies above them. They looked up and saw nothing unusual but could hear sounds of wailing screams as if someone was calling for help. Baba Tajuddijn listened attentively while everyone else was stunned and remained quiet. They looked toward their master to see what he would say or do, as they were sure he knew what was really happening.

Baba Tajuddin looked up once more toward the sky and told everyone to repeat '*Ameen*' after him. He then raised his hands and made *dua*, and when he said '*Ameen*' a few times, everyone else repeated the same. The strange sounds subsided after a while until the situation was back to normal. Just when they thought it was over, the gathering then heard sounds of laughter and glee until that, too, subsided.

As would usually happen in this kind of anomalous situation, the people then turned their attention once again to their master. They waited in anticipation for an explanation to know what it was all about and who they made *dua* for. Baba Tajuddin informed them that a lad among the jinn had died, so the sounds they heard were of distress and mourning over his death. He further told them that the jinn who came were very worried and asked for my supplication to make him alive. The sounds of jubilation were heard when the jinn boy came alive again.



Eerie Sounds in a Bungalow

He heard footsteps outside, as if someone was coming closer. Then there was a loud cry... he heard laughter coming from the courtyard and the sound of someone running around.

A bungalow allotted to Muhammad Usman from Jabalpur, an assistant station master at Nagpur Railway Station, was thought to be haunted by evil spirits. It gained the reputation of being a '*bhoot bangla*' (haunted bungalow). People told him about mysterious events that had occurred and discouraged him from staying there, but he did not pay heed to what they said. The English station master, Norris, advised the same and told him that four successive officers had hardly survived a few days before being found dead. However, Usman needed a place to stay, and the bungalow seemed the right place for him, as it was close to the railway station.

Usman had the place cleaned, as it was full of dust and cobwebs. In the middle of the first night, while sleeping in the bungalow, he heard footsteps outside, as if someone was coming closer, and then a loud cry. He could no longer sleep. Moments later, laughter came from the courtyard, and the sound of someone running around. He locked himself in his bedroom, read *ayatul-kursi*. and hid under a blanket. When he came out in the morning, he saw cooked rice with turmeric in the courtyard and a broken earthen pot. He heard similar eerie sounds the next night and, the following day, saw a human hand lying there. It terrified him so much that he spent the third night in a hotel.

During a morning stroll while staying at the hotel, Usman saw a crowd around an old man in a green dress who came out of his *baggi* and went somewhere. A *pandit* asked if he was new and told him that he was the Tajul Awliya and some details about his holiness and greatness. It rang a bell because his friend back home, Muhammad Qasim, often mentioned Baba Tajuddin. He resolved to meet the Tajul Awliya sometime soon.

The Nature of the Ascension

"Work hard, nurture, and take care of your children when you have them, and then you will find God... Search on your own. Then you'll understand the reality of the Holy Prophet's (uwbp) ascension."

A group of four English-medium students who had heard of Baba Tajuddin but never met him decided to visit the saint one day in Sakardara. While drinking tea at the best tea stall nearby, they discussed at length what they would ask before setting off. During their conversations, the issue of the ascension (*mi'raj*) of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (uwbp) arose. One friend, Fazal Karim, believed it took place spiritually as a dream without involving the body, as he considered it impossible to have gone up into the skies and have returned instantly. Another friend, Abdul Ghaffar, believed it took place physically. The other two were Abbas and Usman, who had stayed a few nights at the haunted bungalow [see Eerie Sounds in a Bungalow]. Usman met Fazal Karim and Abdul Ghaffar at the local law college. They were final-year students and quickly became friends because they were all from Jabalpur. Usman told them about his appointment at the railway station to explain why he was presently in Nagpur.

The meeting with Baba Tajuddin

The four friends saw a strange scene when they arrived. A photographer with his camera on a stool was trying to take a picture of the saint, but he was unable to sit still on a wooden chair. The photographer told him that he wanted to take the photo to sell it so that he could maintain his family as he was poor and added, "Please take this into consideration". Baba Tajuddin looked upset while remarking twice, "What are you saying? Eventually, he complied to have the photo taken of what he called his "*mitti* (body)". The photo turned out well when it was developed later.

Suddenly, the saint's attention turned to the four young men. He was told that they had come to meet him to discuss some things. After looking at them intently, Babaji said, "*Aye han nalaik angrezi parhne waale* (Here come these uneducated English learners)" and proceeded to his room, prompting them to follow him, saying, "*Hoji, Huzoor ko mir'aj jismaani hui thi, ruhaani nahi huwi thi*" (Come, the ascension was

physical, not spiritual). The students, two of whom were a little reluctant at first, followed him inside. They saw someone trying to press their master's feet and being prohibited from doing so. Babaji then asked if Abdul Ghaffar wanted to have the privilege of pressing his feet. He said, "O boy! You may press my feet if you wish".

When Abdul Ghaffar began to press Babaji's feet, Babaji deliberately tightened his muscles, whereupon Abdul Ghaffar asked him to relax them, saying, "How can I massage your feet like this if you tense your muscles?" Babaji replied, "So relax them if you can, using your knowledge of science". Abdul Ghaffar then said, "How can science help in this case? You just need to relax your legs yourself."

At first, Babaji laughed. Then he said, "You're a good lad. Now tell me what you and your friends want to discuss." Abdul Ghaffar introduced himself and his friends and explained the reason for their coming. He asked Babaji, "Education can help us find work, but how can we find God?" To this question, Babaji replied, "Work hard, nurture, and take care of your children when you have them, and then you will find God".

At this point, Abbas asked the main question that was bothering them directly. He asked, "Could you please explain further whether the Holy Prophet Muhammad's (uwbp) ascension took place spiritually or with his physical body?" Since there was a moment of silence, Abdul Ghaffar begged for forgiveness in case they had made a mistake in the matter. However, Babaji expressed happiness at being asked this question. He explained, "Like if you sit on a chair for a photo to be taken, then you may understand, for it turns out to be good. Now, you may all leave."

Usman also wanted to ask something, but he was hesitant to do so. Now, he thought it was too late because they were all asked to leave. As he was about to go, he heard Babaji say, "O foolish boy! Why do you hesitate? Don't be afraid regarding that matter. They'll continue to come and be there, so be ready to strike with a stick (*Darte na ko re, danda lete, so jaate, phir raat aata to peet dete, maar dete*)." While Usman was still wondering but impressed with how Babaji knew about them and their conversation and why he would need a stick, Babaji laughed and added, "You will also come to understand whether the ascension happened spiritually or physically".

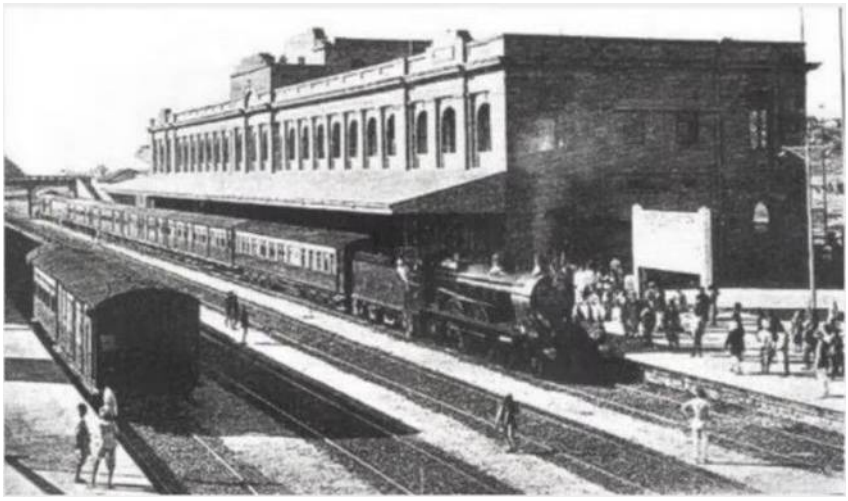
Usman noticed that among the other persons present was Benkat Rao, a railway guard sitting in a corner, continuously gazing at his master. It seemed strange to him that it was six o'clock when the guard had to be

on a train leaving Nagpur for Bombay in fifteen minutes. The guard did not look concerned about the time at all, nor was he wearing his uniform. It was not possible for him to put on his uniform and reach the railway station in the short time remaining. Babaji said something to the guard, addressing him as Sulayman, and the guard kept smiling and sitting there, unconcerned about anything else.

Anyhow, the four friends departed with a good impression and a feeling that their hearts had been purified. Usman, however, remained silent as he kept thinking about what Babaji meant by telling him to be ready to strike and what the outcome would be. He thought if he kept a stick, what use would it be in this situation?

Witnessing bilocation

On the way back, Usman told his friends in detail about what he experienced at the haunted bungalow during the few nights he slept there, why he was temporarily staying at the hotel, and what Baba Tajuddin advised him about being ready to strike. The friends were not sure how to help in this matter, but they decided to visit the bungalow after drinking tea at the railway station.



A train at Nagpur Railway Station in 1857

At the same time, Usman was also wondering about Benkat Rao because he saw him sitting with Baba Tajuddin when he had to board a passenger train bound for Itarsi. There was only one minute remaining. He was still sitting with Babaji and had not left. Fazal Karim asked whether he was the guard who was known to bilocate. Sometimes, he was seen on duty at the railway station, but at the same time, he was often seen in Babaji's presence. He was one of his special devotees and was known to be a man of contemplation, mentally at one with his master and attuned to receiving his grace.

Nagpur Railway Station (front)

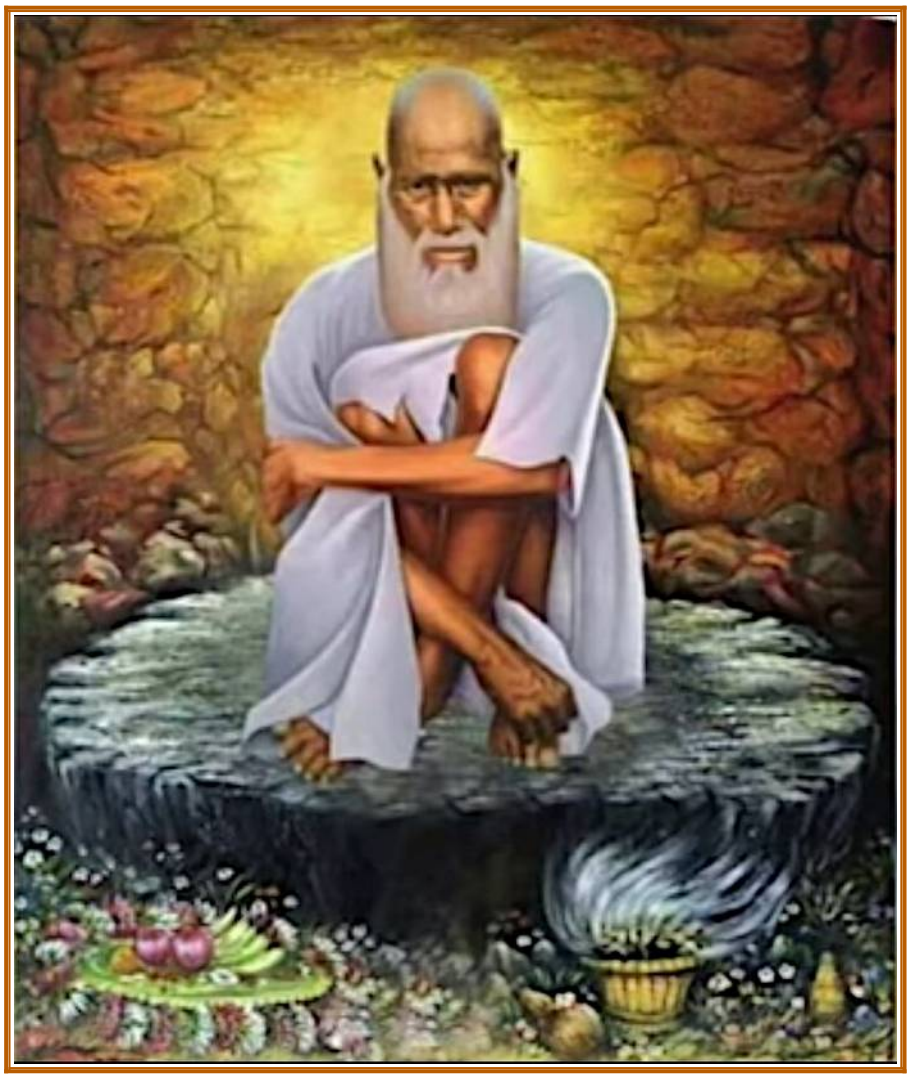
When the lads reached the railway station, they heard the whistle being given. The train was departing on which the guard was supposed to be present. To their amazement, they saw Benkat Rao sitting in his uniform, waving the green flag. He smiled as he moved his head as a gesture of giving *salaam* to the four boys. This puzzled them, and Usman did not ask. They did not know how it was possible for him to have reached the station in his uniform so quickly. One of the friends suggested going back to Sakardara and seeing if the guard was there or asking Babaji about what they witnessed. So, all of them hurriedly returned to Sakardara.

They went straight to where the spiritual master was sitting, except for Fazal Karim and Abbas, who stayed outside. A decorated path led to a room from where *naats* were heard, celebrating *Milad-un-Nabi Shareef* (Holy Prophet Muhammad's (uwbp) birthday). As soon as Abdul Ghaffar and Usman stepped inside, there was loud rejoicing. They looked around while the *durood* and *salaam* were being given passionately. To their amazement again, they saw Benkat Rao standing with folded hands, watching Babaji swirl in a state of spiritual ecstasy. The master's eyes were closed, and tears were flowing from them profusely. The atmosphere in the room was full of blessings because the Holy Prophet's carriage was said to be approaching. There was rejoicing and continuous reading of *durood shareef* and giving *salaam*. An elegant fragrance was detectable that spread throughout the room. However, since everyone was engaged and they witnessed what they had come to check, Abdul Ghaffar and Usman decided to leave.

When they came out of the room and were heading towards the gate, they were in for yet another surprise. There, they saw Babaji near his *baggi* outside the building in a majestic state amidst other people gathered around him, among whom were their friends Abbas and Fazal Karim. They rushed back into the room and saw Babaji still there in ecstasy. When they rushed back out, Babaji was there too. When they went closer, saw his face, and heard his familiar voice, they were sure it was indeed the great saint. The only thing they were unsure of was how he was able to be present at two different places simultaneously.

When Babaji's attention returned to this world, he addressed the four lads who had witnessed two cases of bilocation, "O English-educated ones! Tell me now, was the Holy Prophet's (uwbp) ascension spiritual or physical? Use your knowledge of science to answer! (*Angrezi parhne walo... ab batao, ab larao apni science*)". Fazal Karim was crying and no longer doubted the reality of a physical ascension.

This time, Baba Tajuddin was in a bit of a temper, and he sounded overbearing. Abdul Ghaffar begged for forgiveness for any mistake he had made inadvertently. Babaji made it clear, "*Kursi pe baethte, mitti ki tasweer lete, leken mi'raj ka inkaar nahi karte* (One can even take a picture of a physical body while seated, but never deny the ascension)". He then turned his attention to the other two with an expression of sadness and said, "Oh, what silliness! You have come here again. Your post has been downgraded." Due to the strong sentiments being expressed, Usman hid behind Abdul Ghaffar, but there were some words for him, too. Seeing his fear, Babaji turned to him and reminded him, "What are you afraid of, Usman? Sleep with a stick, and don't watch Sulayman secretly. Search on your own. Then you'll understand the reality of the Holy Prophet's (uwbp) ascension as well."



Back in the Haunted Bungalow

Usman heard more threatening sounds... He saw a mysterious, shapeless figure coming down... dim and transparent, like thin smoke... closely behind it, there appeared to be another shadowy figure... coming down along the rope towards his bed.

After meeting and asking Baba Tajuddin about the nature of the Holy Prophet Muhammad's (uwbp) ascension and witnessing the bilocation miracle, Usman and his friends, Abdul Ghaffar, Fazal Karim, and Abbas, returned from Sakardara. Usman went back to his bungalow. The other three cancelled their plans to visit him at night, despite having agreed earlier in the day to accompany him to solve the mystery. That night, however, nothing strange happened, so Usman was able to sleep peacefully except for the constant thoughts of what had happened earlier in the day and what he had witnessed.

The following night, the situation was back to normal. Usman was woken up suddenly at around two o'clock in the night. He heard sounds from the courtyard that were gradually getting louder. Like a few days before, they were of laughter and someone running around. Usman remembered Babaji's words. He had a stick ready by his side and felt more confident than before. He plucked up the courage to open the door and step outside with the stick in one hand and a lantern in the other. During this moment, there was dead silence.

Usman went ahead to the door of the courtyard, opened it, and

stepped outside. When he pointed the lantern at a dry flower pot, he saw two red embers glowing that suddenly vanished. There was no longer any laughter or other sound, only an eerie silence. Still, he did not dare go any closer. The fear made his body shiver. He went back inside, closed the door, went straight back into his bedroom, and locked it from the inside. He soon fell asleep, but a while later, the sounds returned, and his eyes opened again.

This time, Usman heard more threatening sounds coming from inside the room in which he was trying to sleep. He held the stick firmly in his hand. After a few minutes, the sounds subsided and ceased, but Usman noticed a rope hanging on the ventilator that was not there before and something attached to its upper end. Then, he saw a mysterious, shapeless figure coming down from it. It was dim and transparent, like thin smoke. Following closely behind it, there appeared to be another shadowy figure. They were coming down along the rope towards his bed.

Usman struck at the smoky figures. It appeared that he had killed them, whereupon their forms dissipated, and they disappeared altogether. When this happened, Baba Tajuddin's words echoed in his ears. He remembered being told that they would keep coming and to always be ready to strike. This thought occupied his thoughts while he tried to sleep. There were no more sounds that night.

In the morning, Usman saw that he had killed a woodpecker and a couple of snakes. Birds were chirping in the courtyard at the time. When Usman changed his clothes and went to the courtyard, he saw birds pecking on grains of yellow rice. He looked at the flower pots. At their sides were two pieces of live coal. It was these objects that were shining in the night, which made him afraid. However, on the dry lawn, he noticed fresh blood spots. He followed the stains. They led to a *baggi* outside the bungalow in which Abdul Ghaffar and Fazal Karim were sitting.

Usman told his friends what happened during the night. He showed them the blood spots, the scene in the courtyard, and the dead snakes in

his bedroom. Fazal Karim inspected the whole bungalow carefully. He asked the other two to follow him. They came to an area of scavengers about a furlong away from the bungalow. After enquiring, they were informed that Bhagwat's scavenger dog had gone missing. Fazal Karim heard that it had been killed. But the people told him they had banished it from the area, and it went to live in the graveyard of the Hindus.

Upon further enquiry, the friends came to know that the dog stole goods from people's huts, typically earthen cooking pots containing food. It would then run away, break those pots, and eat from them. This explained the broken pottery and rice in Usman's courtyard. Back inside the bungalow, Fazal Karim showed the blood spots were those of a hyena, which are known to be fond of eating dog meat. Although this explained some more things, it did not explain everything, especially the laughter sounds and the human hand. The possibility was mentioned that there must have been a struggle between a hyena and a dog inside the bungalow, in which the dog overpowered and injured the hyena. The hand might have been brought by the dog from the graveyard. After making these suggestions, Fazal Karim became silent.

His attention turned toward the bungalow's roof. He heard a mysterious voice from the *ghayb* telling him to bring a ladder, so he asked his friends to get him a ladder and also three brooms. They borrowed a ladder from Doctor Chaudhry's house nearby. Fazal Karim removed the material that was covering the roof. He saw a thick layer of dust spread all over the bungalow, many bird nests in places, and lizards moving around. It was apparent that this part of the bungalow had not been cleaned in a very long time. The three friends then cleaned the whole roof. They cleared it of all the dust, nests, and lizards.

For two consecutive days, there were no strange events during the night at the bungalow at all. The sense of danger and fear quickly faded. Usman recovered his confidence, although there was still a little worry in his mind. More secrets about the bungalow had yet to be uncovered [see Unearthings about the Bungalow].

The Order to Wash an Idol

Babaji just smiled... He asked Usman to do the task of washing the idol instead, but he did not say anything in this matter.

One day, while returning from his college hostel, Usman was a little worried when he saw Baba Tajuddin's *baggi* coming in his direction. He quickly hid behind a tree. He was trembling when it stopped nearby. Laughing at Usman, Babaji said, "O Usman! Why are you hiding? The snakes died, so why are you afraid now? Don't be afraid of Tajuddin. Only be afraid of God."

Usman came out. He gave *salaam* to Babaji respectfully. Babaji took hold of his hand, pulled him onto the carriage, and headed for Sakardara. Along the way, many people surrounded the carriage until a large crowd gathered that was too large to manage. Babaji descended from his carriage and prayed for all those in need together. He then scolded them, and in a state of *istighraq*, he expressed annoyance whilst smiling. He grabbed Usman's hand again, got back into his carriage, and moved on.

An even larger number of devotees were waiting inside the Sakardara palace, but Babaji walked straight over to a small temple. An annual fair was held there a day before, but there was still some hustle and bustle. Seeing Babaji present there, three Brahmin pundits came out to greet him before standing respectfully with folded hands. He said to them softly, "Your big idol looks unclean and dirty, so I want to wash it".

Somewhat agitated at hearing what the Muslim saint just said, they replied, "Baba Sahib, have pity on us. We will wash our deity ourselves." He again advised them to let him do this task, saying, "Allow me to wash it for you. You pundits are at risk, as is Raghuji. It would be wise for you to comply with what Tajuddin is saying."

The pundits politely declined the offer. Babaji just smiled this time and walked away. He asked Usman to do the task of washing the idol instead, but he did not say anything in this matter. The pundits were relieved that Baba Tajuddin had left, but Usman came to know that some Hindus were upset and angry over what he said, although they did not have the courage to say anything to the saint directly.

Healed by Inhaling

Baba Tajuddin told her with confidence, "That's enough. Now, you are well." ...Rani opened the bandage around the girl's head because her headache was now completely gone.

After Abdul Jabbar Khan's sanctification experience, Baba Tajuddin proceeded toward his chamber. Raja Sahib told him, hesitatingly, that the Chief Commissioner, Sir Benjamin Robertson, had arrived along with the Inspector General of Police and that they were waiting in the palace to meet him. He asked for permission to bring them in. Babaji granted permission, telling him, "*Bulaa re bandar ko, bechaara pareshaan ha. Tajuddin kissi ko rokta nahi* (Call the monkey over. He's very worried, and Tajuddin does not decline anyone)".

Sir Benjamin Robertson and his wife in 1917

The moment the officers arrived inside Baba Tajuddin's chamber, Usman was sitting near Benkat Rao, the railway guard, and a strong young *pehlvan* servant was massaging the master's feet. Sir Benjamin took off his shoes and entered the chamber with bare feet, along with Raja Sahib. Baba Tajuddin said to the officer boldly, "O monkey! Why have you bothered to spend so much? You have unknowingly troubled your daughter. If you had simply made her inhale the earth instead, she would have been better by now."

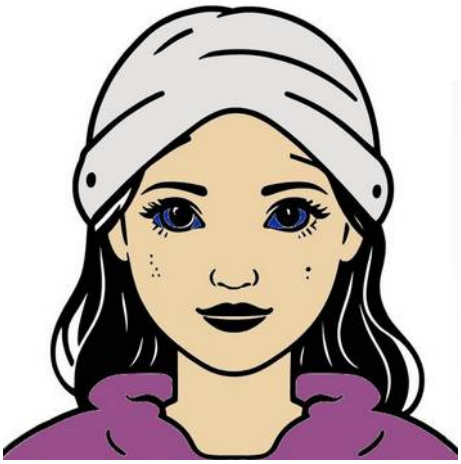
No one was able to understand what Babaji meant. Usman looked at the door. He saw the Inspector General sitting near the shoes, still trembling mildly and with tears flowing from his eyes. Beside him stood Rani Annapurnabai, Raja Raghuji's wife, and Sir Benjamin's wife and niece, waiting just outside. When Babaji looked at them, he stood up immediately to honour the three ladies. He was already highly respectful of the Rani by treating her as his own daughter. He told them to "come inside", and asked, "Why are you standing outside?"

Rani paid her respects to Baba Tajuddin by saying *namaste* with her hands brought together. The other two ladies followed suit. She then came forward while holding the girl's hand, whose head was bandaged. She pleaded, "*Huzoor* Babaji, this girl has a serious headache. No doctor in England or *hakeem* in Hindustan has been able to cure her. When they told me about this situation, I advised them to bring her to you. Sir Benjamin brought her so that she may be healed through your breath."

Rani said all this in a single breath. After hearing about the girl, Babaji replied, "This monkey is insane. He has troubled the girl instead by bringing her here. Why didn't he just tell me about her?" He added, "*Kai ko itna paesa kharcha kiya re? Mitti khelaate, achhi hojaati* (Why did you spend so much in doing all this when all you had to do was give her some earth?)". Anyhow, Babaji asked the girl affectionately to come forward and sit before him. He told her very caringly, "Daughter, don't worry. By inhaling the earth, you will get well. You can then open your bandage."

As the girl did not understand Urdu, she just looked at him in surprise. Raja Raghuji asked which earth to give her to inhale. Babaji instructed them, "*Ye bandar laiga sarak se mitti* (This monkey will bring it from the road)" and "Give it to her to inhale, then she will become well." Sir Benjamin had met Baba Tajuddin once before, so he

understood this instruction. He immediately went to the road, brought back a handful of earth from there, and was about to give it to Baba Tajuddin, who reminded him, "*Mujhe kya deta re, bachhi ko deta, achhi hojati* (Why are you giving it to me? Give it to your daughter so she can get well)". Benjamin told the girl to inhale it. The smell made her sneeze three or four times. With each sneeze, an insect came out from inside her. When this was over, Baba Tajuddin told her with confidence, "That's enough. Now, you are well."



Rani opened the bandage around the girl's head because her headache was completely gone. The girl became tearful out of feelings of gladness and relief. All the others in the room were also very grateful and happy for her. Sir Benjamin then presented Babaji with a large sum of money. The way Babaji looked at the gift, wrinkles were visible on his forehead. But with fatherly love and affection, he said to the girl, "*Tu to hamaari beti re, baap beti se leta nahi, deta ha* (You're my daughter, and fathers give to their daughters, not take from them)". Saying this, he put his hand on the pillow and put some coins in her hand, saying, "*Ja, ye hamaari taraf se nazraana lekar ja* (Take this gift from me)". She accepted the money happily. Then, in a pleasant and joyful mood, she took leave from the saint's presence.

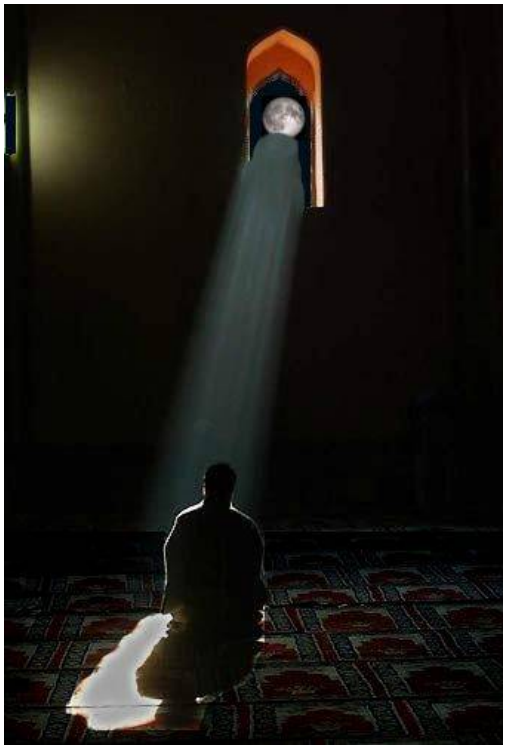
Relieved through Zikr

He adopted an ascetic way of life. He relieved himself of all worldly worries and concerns by spending his time in constant zikr.

Besides the recovery of the girl, there was also a transformation that day in the life of Abdul Jabbar Khan [see Healed by Inhaling]. From then on, he would do constant z*ikr* (remembrance through constant repetition) of "Allah, Allah" all night. Baba Tajuddin laid a great deal of emphasis on establishing a connection with God this way. He would say that:

> *If done sincerely, reciting the name of God also helps one remain steadfast and positive and do good things in life.*

Not long after doing this regularly, Abdul Jabbar gave away all his property and wealth in the way of God to other people in need. From then on, he adopted an ascetic way of life. He relieved himself of all worldly worries and concerns by spending his time in constant *zikr*. For some time, Sir Benjamin supported him financially until he was able to arrange for his pension earlier than he was to receive it otherwise.



Connecting with God is the very purpose of Islamic spirituality. Praying and doing *zikr* are activities that lead to God. The person remains peaceful and contented while attentive to the Almighty. Worldly distractions cause the mind to be diverted, which can result in various physical and psychological ailments. This prescription of *zikr* for Abdul Jabbar made him like a caged tiger, as Baba Sahib described, but one who was protected from such ailments. He now benefited many people and was thereby destined to gain closeness to God.

A Hungry Tiger in the Palace

What he saw surprised him, as he did not expect the tiger to be other than ferocious. It was sitting silently and comfortably beside the feet of the magnanimous Baba Tajuddin.

In those days, when Baba Tajuddin asked Usman to wash an idol, and he saw that Babaji had upset some Hindus, there was another upsetting yet unforgettable experience. A tiger was released in the palace compound, which caused panic among all the people. For Baba Tajuddin, it was no different than a domesticated dog. For Usman, however, it made him change his stance for a while, but he reverted to admiring Baba Tajuddin not long after. This is how the day unfolded:

After departing from the temple area where the idol stood, Baba Tajuddin glanced up at an area enclosed by an iron railing. Raja Raghuji had brought a tiger there. When he saw it, he said, "Why have you caged it? The poor creature is worried about being separated from his family. He has become like a dog, 'Tommy', 'Tommy'."

Usman, who was with Baba Tajuddin at the time, became startled. Out of fear and trepidation, he started breathing heavily and rapidly. His body was trembling. In spite of his condition, Babaji went forward and opened the tiger's cage. When the tiger came out, panic spread among all the people throughout the palace compound. Everyone rushed to find a safe haven. The only ones standing firmly in their places besides the spiritual master, albeit frightened and behind their master, were Usman, Baba Tajuddin's servant, and Benkat Rao.

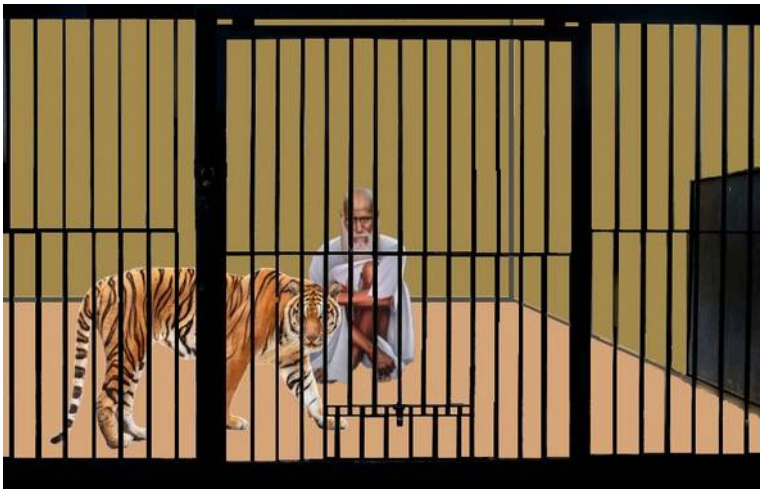
Baba Tajuddin called the tiger and said to it, "*Bas re, shor nahi karte* (That's enough! Don't make noise!)" and added, "Such a good dog you are tiger!" He then turned around to Usman and told him, "A tiger imprisoned in a cage becomes a dog. Usman, why don't you become a Tommy, too, and wash that big idol like I told you to?"

What Baba Tajuddin was referring to was the loyalty a dog shows his master by obeying his instructions. Usman's mind was stunned. He wanted to say something, but he was unable to speak at all. His sight was fixated on the tiger so that he could remain at a safe distance from it. Meanwhile, Benkat Rao was only looking at Baba Tajuddin, heedless of whatever else was going on. Baba Tajuddin caressed the tiger as it came closer and took it to his room.

When the tiger entered Baba Tajuddin's chamber, someone plucked the courage to come out of their haven and quickly inform the Maharaja. Raja Raghuji immediately hurried to the area where the tiger was, with a rifle in his hand. What he saw surprised him, as he did not expect the tiger to be anything other than ferocious. It was sitting silently and comfortably beside the feet of the magnanimous Baba Tajuddin, who was upset and feeling pitiful. When Babaji saw the Maharajah there, he said to him, "*Kyun band kar rakha ha is bandar ko?* (Why have you caged this monkey?)". This perturbed the Maharaja. He continued, "O foolish one! Why have you come here? Shall I put you inside the cage instead?" and reminded him, "*Kutte ko jab pinjre me band karte to khaana bhi dete* (When you put a dog into a cage, you must feed it)".

Though startled, the Maharaja was also distressed and very worried for the people. He told his master, "No, Baba Sahib! Please, lead it back inside the cage yourself, as everyone else is terrified." Baba Tajuddin informed and instructed him that the tiger "has been hungry since yesterday, so you must make arrangements and give him something to eat". The Maharaja apologised and assured Babaji that he would do that.

But sensing his hesitation in saying this, Baba Tajuddin again expressed his displeasure at the situation of the tiger being left hungry. Nonetheless, he ordered the tiger to return to its cage and assured that it would be fed shortly.



The tiger got up immediately and acted upon the saint's instruction. When the Maharaja enquired about the tiger's feed, he came to know that it had indeed been hungry for the past two days. The person who was supposed to give it meat had left the palace without permission. Meanwhile, Usman went out of the palace and resolved never to do *seva* of Baba Tajuddin again. He had had enough. He could not handle any more distress.

Tiger statues now mark the spot where Baba Tajuddin often sat (under a tree) in the palace grounds

Sanctification of an Idol

Baba Tajuddin then activated the idol's eyes and moved its neck around a little. This shocked Abdul Jabbar... In a semi-conscious state, his tongue kept uttering... "Allah Hoo" in a sublime manner.

Some days after Usman became upset with Baba Tajuddin due to being exposed to a tiger in the palace, and when Baba Tajuddin was known to be in a good mood, Usman and his friend Abdul Kareem set off for Sakardara. Before they reached there, however, having left their college hostel, they saw Baba Tajuddin in his *baggi*. The saint stopped there and then. He gave the two a lift to the palace.

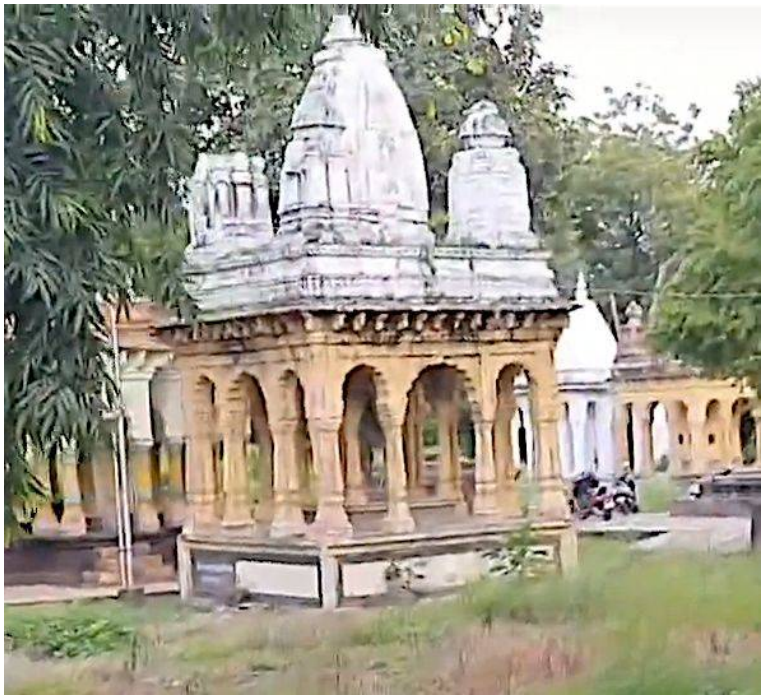
When inside the palace compound, Baba Tajuddin took hold of Usman's hand and led him toward the temple area again. Suddenly, Babaji turned to him intently and said emphatically, "The big idol is unclean, and flies are hovering around it, so can you wash it now or not?"

Usman could barely respond with a sigh and the words "No, Baba!" to decline the request. Baba Tajuddin looked at him intently. He said to him this time, "What are you afraid of? Come with me. Broken threads need to be fixed."

By the time they reached the temple, Raja Raghuji Rao and Abdul Jabbar Khan, the Inspector General of Police in Nagpur, had also arrived from behind the railing. Upon seeing Baba Tajuddin, Raghuji stood still and saluted him before folding his hands in respect. Three Brahmin priests then came out of the temple, greeted Baba Tajuddin, and also folded their hands. Baba Tajuddin laughed. He then turned to Abdul Jabbar, saying, "O big dog! What brought you here? You will become a tiger and be caged. Then what will you eat?"

The police officer uttered involuntarily, "O Baba! Sanctify it!"

Baba Tajuddin responded by telling him, “He must be very hungry then, but the one to be sanctified is sitting there like a stone”, while pointing to one of the stone statues there.



Baba Tajuddin then activated the idol’s eyes and moved its neck around a little. This shocked Abdul Jabbar. He fell down. In a semi-conscious state, his tongue kept uttering the words “Allah Hoo” in a sublime manner while his body was writhing about like a sacrificial animal, and his eyes became red. Baba Tajuddin was watching him all the while, in a condition of rapture. Around ten minutes passed this way before Raghuji became disconcerted. Then, Baba Tajuddin moved its head back into its normal position. This made the officer regain consciousness, but his eyes were still flamed in red, and he was limping around.

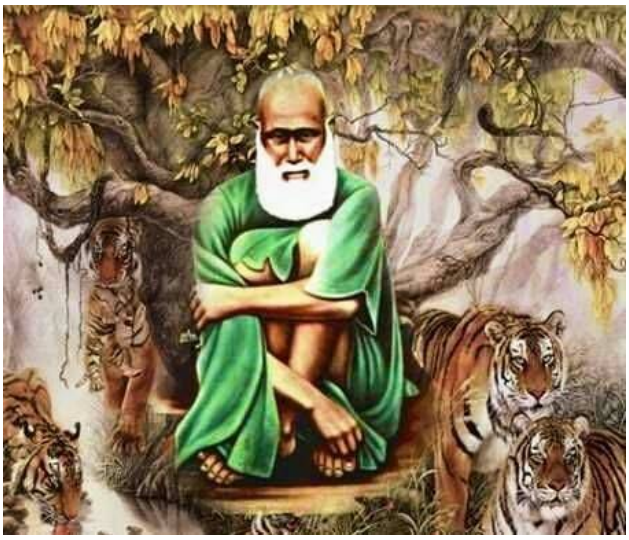
Baba Tajuddin explained what happened by telling those gathered, “His stomach is now full. He was hungry for many days, but now his hunger has been satisfied. The sanctification has been accomplished.”

Raghuji Rao sitting beside Baba Tajuddin among other devotees

Baba Sahib's Pet Tigers

Babaji often went inside... The tigers would lick his feet to pay homage and then lie down beside him with their mouths in his lap. They were like pet cats for the spiritual master.

Not long after the Maharaja brought a tiger into his palace [see A Hungry Tiger in the Palace], he arranged for another and a permanent place for them on both sides of Baba Tajuddin's room. Their openings were closed tightly with iron bars. When Babaji went inside them, the tigers would lick his feet to pay homage and lie beside him with their mouths in his lap. They were like pet cats for the spiritual master. Whenever this happened for prolonged periods, people would gather to watch safely from outside. Some people were keen to see his pets even when he was not present.



One day, a man put his arm through the bars, and a tiger injured his hand, almost biting it off. When Baba Sahib came to know about this incident, he came over and ordered the lock to be opened immediately. He then went inside. Meanwhile, those outside were panicking as soon as the door opened. The tiger that attacked the man paid homage to the saint in its usual way. Babaji put his hand over its head. He remarked that the hairs on its head and neck had grown too long. He knew that no hairdresser would dare to do this task, so he asked for scissors. He cut the tiger's hair short with them right away and came back outside.

As for the man who hurt his hand, Babaji placed his hand over the area of injury, which healed him instantly. From then on, the tiger never hurt anyone ever again. Some people would put their arms inside without any reaction from the tiger. Some bravely stood beside it, but it no longer behaved like it used to. Rather, it now behaved like a domestic cat would.

Six Gulab Jamans

Babaji handed them the leaf bowl, in which there were six gulab jamans. He took out one for each of the two of them, and told them to eat these instead of lizards.

A few days after the tiger was let loose in the palace and before Baba Tajuddin healed a girl of a persistent headache, another unforgettable incident occurred, this time at the boys' hostel. It began when Usman's friends were in their room and heard that Baba Tajuddin was passing through the area with a large leaf bowl in his hand. It was made from the leaves of the 'Flame of the Forest' (Butea Frondosa) tree.

For some unknown and strange reason, Babaji entered directly into the kitchen inside the living quarters of Hindu boys. This matter was intolerable for them because there was a strict arrangement of segregation along religious lines. This made some of them upset and a few angry. Although they also held Baba Tajuddin in great respect, it was a predicament for them.

Babaji opened a curry pot and immediately ran from there, creating a commotion and running through the dining hall. A Brahmin mendicant with long hair was sitting nearby, about to eat. Babaji snatched the morsel of food from his mouth and overturned the plate onto the floor. It was the first place that had been served in the dining hall. He then told him loudly so others could also hear, "This is not good for you. It is not suitable for eating. Throw it all away."

The other students waiting for their food in the dining hall were agitated at what was going on. Some were enraged by what the Baba was doing. However, the turmoil quickly changed to widespread relief and gratitude

when a Brahmin student who understood what was happening threw the main curry pot onto the floor of the dining hall, from which the skeletal remains of a dead lizard emerged.

From there, Babaji went over to the Muslim living quarters and straight into Abdul Ghaffar and Fazal Karim's room. The two boys were sitting in hunger, waiting for their friend to come so that they could go outside to eat. There was no arrangement for Muslim students to eat inside the hostel at that time. They were surprised to see Baba Tajuddin come into their room because he had never been inside the hostel before. They gave him *salaam* with much respect and honour. Then, Babaji handed them the leaf bowl, in which there were *six gulab jamans*. He took out one for each of the two of them and told them to eat these instead of lizards. He said, "Don't eat lizards. Eat these delicious *gulab jamans*, and remember not to denigrate them."

Baba Tajuddin turned to Fazal Karim to make him not point out defects in others. By denigration, he was referring to people of other religions in particular, but they did not understand what he meant right away. He added: "Rather, try to hide defects and make even bad people seem good. Do not make yourself worse by imitating them."

At that moment, a group of twelve Hindu boys came by, running toward Baba Tajuddin. A Brahmin lad named Chorbe from the group stood before Babaji with folded arms and much respect and honour. Babaji turned his attention to him and told him, "They do not eat food touched by Muslims and do not eat *gulab jaman*, but prefer to eat a lizard instead. Is that right, you foolish lad?"

With a pale face, Chorbe replied, “No, Baba Sahib! I would gladly take food touched by you.”

Hearing this, Abdul Ghaffar gave one *gulab jaman* to Chorbe, who took it and ate it. Chorbe gave *salaam* to Babaji, who looked at Abdul Ghaffar and smiled but did not say anything. The other Hindu boys gathered around Baba Tajuddin. They began praising him and requested that his holiness pray for them to pass their exams. Babaji told them, “Go, foolish boys! Rest assured, all of you will pass your exams!”

Having saved the Hindu boys from food poisoning and after giving the *gulab jamans* to Abdul Ghaffar and Fazal Karim and praying for all the students to succeed in their examinations, Baba Tajuddin promptly departed from the hostel. He got back on his horse-drawn carriage and returned to Sakardara. Meanwhile, Usman returned to the hostel to take his friends out to a restaurant. He had missed Baba Tajuddin’s presence, but he heard the details of everything that happened at the hostel that day. Usman reverted to admiring Baba Tajuddin again, notwithstanding the terrifying experience when Baba Tajuddin put him in danger from a tiger let loose at the palace and his resolve to stay away from Baba Tajuddin from then on. It is for this reason that Usman went back to the palace after witnessing the transformation of Abdul Jabbar Khan and the healing of Sir Benjamin’s daughter.

Favours of Sir Benjamin

Baba Tajuddin's spiritual services to humanity were already legendary, but Sir Benjamin,... gave some financial assistance that proved invaluable as well.

When Baba Tajuddin healed Sir Benjamin Robertson's daughter of a persistent headache that was unable to be cured in London, he felt forever grateful to the saint. As a gesture of his gratitude, he made some significant contributions to the welfare and development of the Muslim community in the central provinces of British India during the second decade of the 20th century. The meeting of these two prominent nobilities had a lasting impact. Baba Tajuddin's spiritual services to humanity were already legendary, but Sir Benjamin (1864-1953), Chief Commissioner of the Central Provinces, gave some financial assistance that proved invaluable as well.

Sir Benjamin was renowned for being broad-minded and having the capacity to look at things from multiple perspectives without prejudice. He helped establish many schools, including Islamic schools, by allotting lands for them and arranging for their construction. He also provided jobs to many educated Muslims in these schools. One school in Jabalpur was named after him, as 'Robertson Islamic School', and an existing college in Jabalpur was named after him in 1916 in honour of his contributions. Anjuman High School, established later, is also a reminder of Sir Benjamin's meeting with Baba Tajuddin in Nagpur itself.

Sir Benjamin Robertson, Chief Commissioner of the Central Provinces

Since Baba Tajuddin prayed for the success of the hostel boys in their exams, all of them passed. But those who ate a *gulab jaman* from Baba Tajuddin's hands passed in the first division. They were Abdul Ghaffar, Fazal Karim, Abbas, and

Chorbe. The day after the results were announced, Sir Benjamin invited the four of them, but only Fazal Karim and Abbas came because the others had gone back to their respective villages. He issued orders to appoint both of them as sub-collectors for the administration. After two years of *khidmat*, they were later promoted to assistant commissioners.

When Abdul Ghaffar and Chorbe returned to Nagpur a few days later, they were appointed as deputy sub-collectors. However, due to there being no vacancies, they were not promoted despite their long service. Some years later, Sir Benjamin was transferred from there, but before leaving, he advised the next Chief Commissioner to take an active interest in the needs of the local Muslim community.

Sir Benjamin Robertson with the children he supported

Anjuman High School (present-day view)

Promoted by Baba's Well-Wishes

Baba Tajuddin placed his hand on their heads out of affection... Norris was promoted... Fazal Karim went to Bilaspur for his new post... Doctor Chaudhry... was officially appointed as the royal physician... [and] two secrets were revealed to Usman.

One evening, Usman, Abdul Ghaffar, Fazal Karim, Chorbe, and Norris, the station master, sat together for tea. This was during those days when Abdul Ghaffar was posted in Sagar but visiting Nagpur, Chorbe was working in Nagpur, and Usman had not been to meet Baba Tajuddin for quite some time since the miraculous healing of Sir Benjamin's daughter. A lady named Lalita had asked Usman to request Babaji to pray for improvement in Doctor Chaudhry's practice and for his success. Norris also needed to meet Babaji. So, after tea, they all went over to meet the spiritual master.

Baba Tajuddin was in his room when the group arrived. But he was in a state of *istighraq*, so they had to wait awhile before he returned to a normal state of conscious awareness of this world. His face looked fresh as soon as he saw Usman. He asked him, "O Usman! Where were you for so many days? Why did you not come here? The idol is getting more unclean. Please wash it right away."

Usman stood there, thinking that he should take the same stance as the Maharaja did. He said, "No, Babaji! You stay here, please. There is no need for you to go there. The Maharaja will have the idol washed." Baba Tajuddin told Usman, "Raja Raghuji could not wash it. Are you sure you want to go his way? Why are you trying to absolve your duty again and not listening to me? Why are you hesitant to do this task? And why have you come here now, anyway? Tell me why? Go from here now, boy!"

These words made Usman worry because it was the first time he had opened his tongue before the saint in this manner and the first time Babaji admonished him this severely. Usman remained silent. Fazal Karim then tried to change the topic to turn the master's attention to Doctor Chaudhry's request. He told him that Chorbe and Norris were also present to meet him. At that point, Chorbe gave *salaam* to Baba Tajuddin and came forward.

Baba Tajuddin responded by saying, “No! He did not come here to simply convey *salaam*. Don’t you think I know that? He wants to say that eating those *gulab jamans* has not yet satisfied his stomach. He wants to eat more, but he does not know how to save himself from stomach aches by not eating lizards.” Turning his attention back to Usman, he added, “Would you like to eat, Usman?”

This caused Usman to feel uneasy in this matter, as he was already trying to be extra cautious. Baba Tajuddin continued speaking, “A doctor treats illnesses of the stomach. A stomach ache can happen if one eats too much. The donkey is good for now. Just show the small flag.”

It was evident that Baba Tajuddin was not fully out of his condition of *istighraq*, so all the young men remained silent. Fazal Karim then indicated with his hand that it would be better to leave, so they all came out of the room. Fazal Karim also assured them that Babaji had given them enough information to allay their concerns. Still, Chorbe insisted that they should go back in. But Norris was trembling, his eyes turned red, and he could not say anything.

During this state of indecision, Baba Tajuddin suddenly came out of the room. All the young men were afraid of what Babaji was going to say or do next. Babaji addressed Usman directly: “O Usman! You still haven’t left, despite what I told you! Neither have you obeyed my instruction to wash the idol. And you brought a monkey along to give me *salaam*! Take the well-wishes of Tajuddin, you foolish lad!”

Babaji’s words still seemed harsh, but this time, he said them in a softer tone. He then invited Usman and Norris into the room, and said to them, “He is good to a monkey because he is honest. Usman, you give a *gulab jaman* to him and tell me what that monkey wants.” Norris began trembling even more with fear, but he managed to utter the words, “Nothing, Babaji”. Baba Tajuddin placed his hand on their heads out of affection and asked them to leave from there.

Usman was thinking of buying some *gulab jaman* to comply with what Babaji asked him to do, but when they reached home, the two were surprised to see two *gulab jamans* on the table. The servant informed them that Benkat Rao’s son brought them as a *niyaz* (food) offering. Despite being a Hindu, he often gave *niyaz* in his neighbourhood for the last prophet of God. On this occasion, he gave the *niyaz* at Usman’s house. As instructed by Baba Tajuddin, Usman gave the two *gulab jamans* to Norris and insisted that he eat them before leaving.

Hardly a week had passed after eating the *gulab jaman* when Norris was promoted to Divisional Superintendent in Bombay and left to start his new job. Meanwhile, Fazal Karim went to Bilaspur for his new post as an assistant commissioner. An offer came for Usman from Bombay as well. Usman could have been promoted like the other two, but he was reluctant to go because it would have meant being separated from Baba Tajuddin. People knew that it would be difficult for him to accept the offer for this reason.

Doctor Chaudhry was still waiting to hear some good news when he received a call from Raja Bijai Chand, the 43rd Raja of Bilaspur, to take his practise there as a physician in the royal court. When he was at the railway station to leave Nagpur, he saw Benkat Rao there as a guard. Benkat gave the doctor a message from his spiritual master. He told him to "give *kharba* to the patient to eat".

The doctor did not know who the patient was to whom he was referring, so he left it at that. When he reached Bilaspur, he heard that the patient was the son of the Raja's brother, who was soon going to be his own son-in-law. The Raja was worried that if his nephew's stomach pain was not cured, it would be difficult for his marriage to go ahead. He had already sought the help of other doctors, but they were unable to cure his nephew. The doctor tried to cure his patient for three days, but to no avail. The stomach pains only became more and more unbearable.

When he received a reminder from Benkat Rao to give *kharba* powder to the patient, he decided to give it a try. Within ten days, the patient had fully recovered. Due to the recovery of the Raja's nephew and son-in-law, Doctor Chaudhry's name and fame spread far and wide, and he was officially appointed as the royal physician in the court of the Raja of Bilaspur. Within a period of three months, the doctor's practise increased so much that he could hardly spare any time for himself.

Meanwhile, Usman felt lonely after most of his friends had left Nagpur, so he decided to pay a visit to Bilaspur. Fazal Karim met him warmly and stayed in his house. While staying with Fazal Karim, two secrets were revealed to Usman: one about the idol Baba Tajuddin asked to wash several times, and the other about the haunted bungalow.

The Secret of the Idol

Fazal Karim then turned to explain why Usman had made a big mistake by not carrying out Baba Tajuddin's instruction to wash the idol... "Since you didn't, your fortune is likely to be overturned... and there's nothing that can be done now."

When Usman was staying with Fazal Karim in Bilaspur, they discussed two important matters that were not yet fully understood. Since Fazal Karim was an investigator, he was able to research and shed light on them with insightful new information. One matter was Baba Tajuddin's strange insistence for Usman to wash a Hindu idol. The other concerned the haunted bungalow in which Usman lived for some time.

Late one night, the two friends were talking when the discussion turned to the haunted bungalow. Fazal Karim told Usman that he investigated the temple and happenings at the bungalow but wanted to ask a couple of things first about his family background. He said that during the course of the investigation, he discovered that Usman might have a connection with the Raja Bhonsle dynasty within the Maratha clan. A conversation with Babaji some days earlier also suggested the same. Usman confirmed that his great-grandfather indeed belonged to the Maratha caste in the small Nagpur area and that he converted to Islam.

Fazal Karim then showed Usman an old document mentioning that Raja Raghuji's estates were being auctioned by a court of wards on behalf of the government due to issues with loans and tax liabilities. He told him that he was appointed as the custodian and had been to Bombay in connection with the matter. Fazal Karim continued further, telling Usman that all members of Raja Raghuji's family were murdered by the British army and that he had no children of his own. This was likely Raja Raghuji Bapusaheb Bhonsle III, the 7th Maharaja of Nagpur in the 19th century, who failed to have an heir.

Then, while telling Usman that a prince named Raj Kumar escaped from the palace and was never found later, he pointed to a name in the document. He asked Usman whether he was his great-grandfather. Fazal

Karim's suspicion was confirmed when Usman revealed that his grandmother had mentioned this very name.

Fazal Karim then turned to explain why Usman had made a big mistake by not carrying out Baba Tajuddin's instruction to wash the idol. He added, "Usman, you should have obeyed Babaji. Since you didn't, your fortune is likely to be overturned, as it was for Raghuji. Sadly, everything will be gone, and there's nothing that can be done now."

Usman was disturbed hearing all this from Fazal Karim, but he was still unclear on some things. He said he didn't wash the idol because it would have upset the Hindus and that the Brahmins at the temple also did not wash their idol when Baba Tajuddin told them to. However, why this was necessary was not clear, so he asked Fazal Karim to explain more. Fazal Karim revealed to him:

> *During the attachment process, the government took possession of Raja Raghuji's wealth and properties. Among them was a document by the Commissioner that mentions the location of an idol of Mahadev at the temple Baba Tajuddin took you to. When I investigated this matter further, I found out that Prince Balaji had been there disguised as a Hindu priest for two days. Under police guard, he washed the idol, which removed its outer coating made of vermillion. Underneath this coating, writing was engraved on the idol, which became readable and gave details of a treasure trove.*

Usman looked at the document carefully. He recognised the writing and signature from documents kept by his grandmother in a small box she kept safe. In fact, he was sure it must have come from that same box. He told Fazal Karim that the box was sold to a dealer some days ago when her grandmother's house was cleared. Usman now understood that he had lost a very precious document. Fazal Karim revealed that he stole this document from the collection under official custody solely for his sake, which was a crime. Since it was no longer possible for Usman to prove his title, he tore that document up and told Usman that there was no need for it anymore. Usman thought he had heard enough because it was difficult for him to accept his own misfortune. But the mystery of the haunted bungalow still remained.

Unearthings about the Bungalow

People may think there is a ghost at work doing all the mischief, but he was sure his explanation was sound and had unearthed all there was to know about the mystery behind the... haunted bungalow.

After showing Usman the land documents Fazal Karim came across related to Raja Raghuji Rao and telling him why it was necessary to wash the idol, one mystery remained. So, the discussion then turned to unearthing more information about the haunted bungalow to explain the mystery behind it. Although disappointed over the lost opportunity and his own misfortune [see The Secret of the Idol], Usman listened eagerly.

Fazal Karim explained that the snakes he killed at the bungalow were cobras. The cobras had entered the space between the ceiling and the material that covered it, where there was a thick layer of dust. The snakes went there to eat the eggs and small birds from the nests. For this reason, the parent birds made loud crying sounds. It was these sounds that caused the harrowing experience in the bungalow. During the night, the birds fluttered their wings, and some fell, creating the other noises he heard. He said people may think there is a ghost at work doing all the mischief, but he was sure his explanation was sound and had unearthed all there was to know about the mystery behind the so-called haunted bungalow.

Spiritual Insights

It was Baba Tajuddin's style that he would sometimes reveal important and insightful points into the divine nature of reality... In all cases, his emphasis was on helping people know themselves and thereby realise God.

It was Baba Tajuddin's style that he would sometimes reveal important and insightful points into the divine nature of reality. He would explain how a spiritual phenomenon occurs or the mechanism and principles underlying what others perceive as *karamaat*. Moreover, key enabling factors he highlighted for not only understanding but also experiencing a reality included self-negation and establishing a connection with the target. He revealed such secrets not only in special sittings or discourses but sometimes even during the course of a normal conversation.

As Baba Sahib spoke, some devotees present would report witnessing the *ghayb* dimension, feeling light waves being transmitted from his mind, or at least easily comprehending whatever the saint told them even when he was silent. It is a common sign of a saint that any concerns or questions that arise in one's mind while in his presence are dealt with. They may be addressed openly or referred to indirectly but are dealt with even if nothing is said about them at the time. It is not always necessary to ask the saint verbally. This was common in Baba Tajuddin's presence too. His attention was on his devotees and visitors, even without intent, for the sake of serving humanity. Although he was not fluent in Urdu, his words contained such power that Urdu speakers, too, were able to understand the gist of his thoughts perfectly.

The insights Baba Sahib gave covered nature's secrets [see Nature's Secrets], the reason certain humans and animals are mentally linked [see The Tiger in Waki Woods], how life is contained within itself [see Leaves that Turned into Insects], and how he managed to pass through walls [see Passing through a Wall]. He also explained the power of God's name, Ar-Raheem, in reviving the dead [see Reviving the Dead] and the need for the dissolution of one's self-identity before the 'He' [see No 'I' before 'He']. Some of these insights were explained in the form of mystical poetry [see Fondness for Poetry and Naats and Within the Mirror] or exhibited in the form of qawwalis

[see Mehfil-e-Samaa]. Some, for which words were inadequate, were either practically demonstrated [see Leaves that Turned into Insects] or induced in the inquisitor for them to experience the phenomenon first-hand [see An Experience of Wajd]. The latter included cases of teleportation [see Teleported for Hajj and Ajmer Shareef in a Touch]. In one case, a devotee's love for his master was sufficient to have an experience despite his physical remoteness [see The Pot and Jalebi]. In all cases, his emphasis was on helping people know themselves and thereby realise God [see Realising God].

Baba Tajuddin sitting on a chair in old age

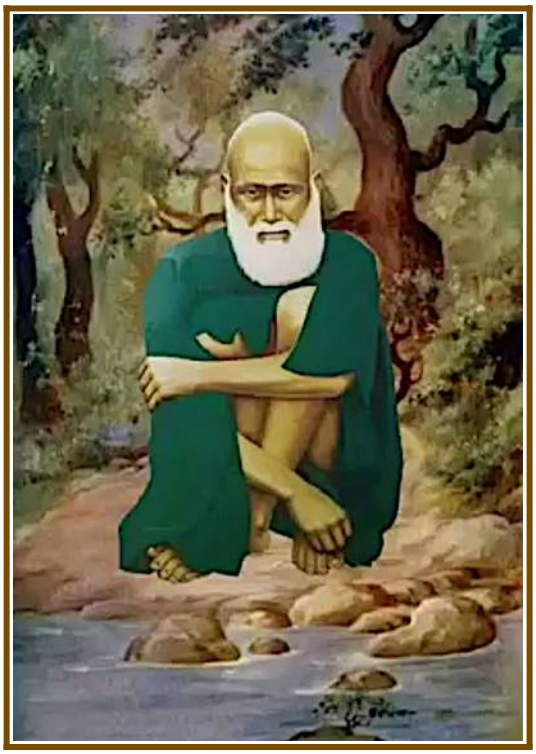
Direct Connective Experiences

Baba Tajuddin held the Holy Quran... to comprehend, contemplate on, and practically apply in one's life... He induced the Quran's spirit in them through practical demonstration and direct personal experiences... deeply connective [ones].

Baba Tajuddin held the Holy Quran in very high esteem, not just as a heavenly book to read but also to comprehend, contemplate on, and practically apply in one's life. He was well versed in the Quran as a young teenager [see No Absences to Explain] and was once advised by a Sufi master to read and study it as if it was being revealed there and then [see Never to Hurt Others' Feelings]. This no doubt had a beneficial impact and was one of the key factors behind his deep understanding of and connection with nature and miraculous abilities.

Reading and Reciting the Quran

It was common to see Baba Tajuddin and his disciples reading the Quran in gatherings. He even conferred the ability to read the Quran on those who were illiterate due to its importance [see Sparked to Read the Quran] and taught non-Muslims to read it as well [see The Majzoob Soldiers]. During night vigils for nocturnal devotional exercises, he would give his disciples certain passages to repeat continuously in the form of a *wird* that helped to make them drowsy and thus conducive to achieving certain spiritual states [see Quranic Recitation and Wird]. In his healing work, Baba Tajuddin would often read Surah Fatihah and Surah Yasin [see The Flower Amulet] and quoted other Quranic verses as necessary according to the matter at hand [see Dedicated to Serve and Emphasis on Righteous Actions]. For example, he often quoted Surah 99, verses 7-8, to emphasise good conduct [see Frantic at Internal Enemies].



Baba Tajuddin read the Quran not only in private or in gatherings with his disciples but also outdoors in the open. One spot where Baba Tajuddin was often seen reading the Holy Quran was by the side of a stream about 4km away from his main area of stay in Waki Woods. He would recite loudly there, and the vibrations would get embedded into the nearby stones and pebbles. Another spot was on the route to Kabul Kandhar in the middle of the River Kanhan [see A Portal to Afghanistan]. The river would echo his words whenever he read there.

The Spirit of the Quranic Messages

Baba Tajuddin stressed on the importance of imbibing the spirit of the Quranic message in order to comprehend it instead of getting lost in its literal wording [see Guidance is a Favour of God]. Achieving this level of comprehension requires a direct connective experience. It involves feeling it being revealed in real time and making its way into one's heart, as Baba Tajuddin was taught at a young age.

Once, at the lunatic asylum, Tajuddin was heard repeating "*inallahdhina aamanu* (Indeed, those who have believed)", and adding alongside it that "You will attain *wa 'amilussalihaati* (and done righteous deeds)". By doing so, he indicated that the Quran was not only a book of teachings on faith but also a practical course for applying to one's life. He made it clear, however, that this was only possible when one had captured its essence. He pointed this out to all those who desired to gain sainthood. Maryam Amma understood its importance very well.

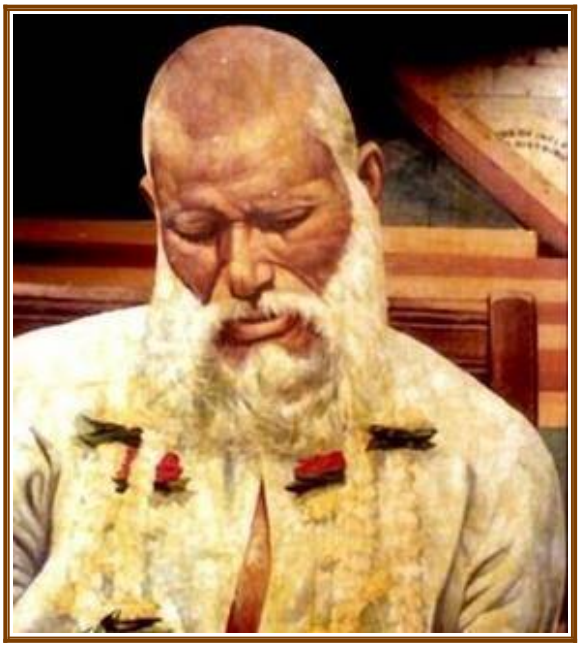
A learned man once came to meet Baba Tajuddin with the desire to know the hidden meanings of the verses in Surah Muzammil. Babaji smiled at the idea and explained to him while referring to his *mureeds*, "Dear! Even these blind ones manage to read in our presence."

By saying this, Baba Tajuddin meant that, although some were not sufficiently literate to read the Quran, he induced the Quran's spirit in

them through practical demonstration and direct personal experiences. It made them oblivious to their physicality and fully receptive to God's glory. He implied that direct experience was more valuable than just learning about something and hinted that he graced his *mureeds* with such experiences. He added further:

> *This store of wisdom being spread by me is such that the more you acquire from it, the closer you will be to your divine self.*

Connecting with the Quran



Hazrat Farid Khan Fiza, the headmaster of what was then Anjuman High School [see Favours of Sir Benjamin], which later became a college, was a close devotee of Baba Tajuddin. He would often go to meet his spiritual guide after completing his duties and accompany him on his trips to the woods. Farid recalled an event while he was with his master during late night hours. Babaji suddenly turned to him and told him to read the Quran. He started reciting. Babaji listened with closed eyes for a while before instructing him to stop because he was now going to read himself, "*Bas ji, ab ham parhte, ham se sunno* (That's enough, I shall read now, so listen)". Farid noted that the saint's own way of reading the Quran was rather unusual but deeply connective. He would read five verses, then before reading the next five and repeating the cycle, he would say:

> *Allahu Akbar, Allahu akbar, la ilaaha ilallaahu walaahu akbar wa lillaahil hamd.*
>
> *God is the greatest. There is no deity besides Allah, and Allah is the greatest. All praises are only for Allah.*

Nature's Secrets: Other Beings

Nature whispers its secrets to those who care to listen to such whisperings... Thought is the basis and origin of all our life experiences .... "We are closely connected to the galaxies and have an intimate link with them."

Raghu Rao, the Maratha Raja, once asked Baba Tajuddin why the rational-minded are reluctant to explore the *ghayb* and acknowledge the existence of invisible creatures. He said angels and jinns are mentioned in all the divine books but are normally only seen by individuals instead of openly or collectively. He added that they could be an important source of knowledge.

The detailed reply Baba Sahib gave explained why nature whispers its secrets to those who care to listen to such whisperings. More so, it showed that he was a possessor of cosmic secrets and had vast knowledge of the subject matter, as well as the ability to stimulate interest and deep reflection. Baba Sahib was reclining against a pillow at the time. When the *raja* asked this question, the spiritual master looked up at the sky and said:

Baba Tajuddin reclining against a pillow

Well, Raghuji, we are all aware of heavenly bodies like stars since birth, and there is seldom a night when the sky is not observed by us humans. Since we see the stars, we are familiar with them, even if we do not quite understand how they work. Truly, we remain oblivious of many such things present before us because it is beyond our ability to elaborate on what we see and claim to be aware of. Whatever has been claimed about the stars and the moon is nothing more than conjecture because we still do not know much. How strange then that we claim to know something when we do not bother to think whether there is any truth in that claim. Understand this point, and then tell me how limited human knowledge is.

Baba Sahib explained further that we humans think we know a lot, but really, there is still so much we do not know. Angels and jinns are invisible, and stars are far away, but we do not even know much about things nearer and visible to us or that we experience regularly, such as the cycles of days and nights. We cannot deny this phenomenon because we witness it daily. We know they alternate, and we know, for instance, when a new day begins, but we do not know their true nature and purpose. He remarked, "Such is the habit of mankind!" and prompted Raghuji to ponder.

Baba Sahib then asked Raghu Rao if the little we do know is enough to satisfy a serious-minded person. To guide the *raja* in thinking correctly, he pointed out that the tongue alone cannot tell us anything about the things we see. He added that we must engage our ability to think about what we observe, as sight itself is guided by thought. His point was that the whole process is nothing but an engagement of the thinking process. Sight and other senses are merely silent spectators. Thought is the basis and origin of all our life experiences, as without it, all the senses would be 'deaf, dumb, and blind'. The senses are insubstantial without thought. It is the process of thinking that helps us interpret what we perceive.

Coming back to angels and jinns, Baba Sahib pointed out that like humans, they too are thinking creatures with awareness of their surroundings. By now, the discussion had reached a point where some cosmic secrets could be understood. He told the *raja*:

Whether humans, angels, or jinns, we are all thought forms, as everything that exists is a thought. Listen carefully as many things emerge in our thoughts from the outside. The fact is that

man is influenced by the thinking of other invisible beings, just as he is also affected by the thinking of other humans. It is natural to be fed from the source of unlimited thoughts. Otherwise, we would cease to be linked with other beings in the universe. It is the divine scheme of Mother Nature that we influence each other by means of our thinking.

The *raja* was very eager to learn more. Baba Sahib then explained the difference between the three types of creatures. He told him that man is created from clay, jinns are those thought patterns expressed as archetypes, and angels are thoughts contained in pure and subtle colourless light called '*noor*'. He added that all three types of thought forms make up and pervade the universe and that if they did not interact with one another, the waves that transfer thoughts would not reach other beings. Consequently, thoughts would not be conveyed or exchanged, and the universe would ultimately disintegrate and collapse because it is sustained by thoughts.

As human beings, although our own personal thoughts are confined to the scope of consciousness of clay, we are also familiar with other thought forms on an emotional and mental level by virtue of our connection with other creations. These thought waves of other creatures thus contribute to our own thinking as well. In fact, the whole universe is like a family of beings busily engaged in exchanging thoughts with one another. We are inspired abundantly this way, but simultaneously, others learn a great deal from us, too. Jinns and angels are creatures whose thinking patterns are closest to ours. They resemble humans the most in their behaviour and attitude, which is why "they are more habituated to us".

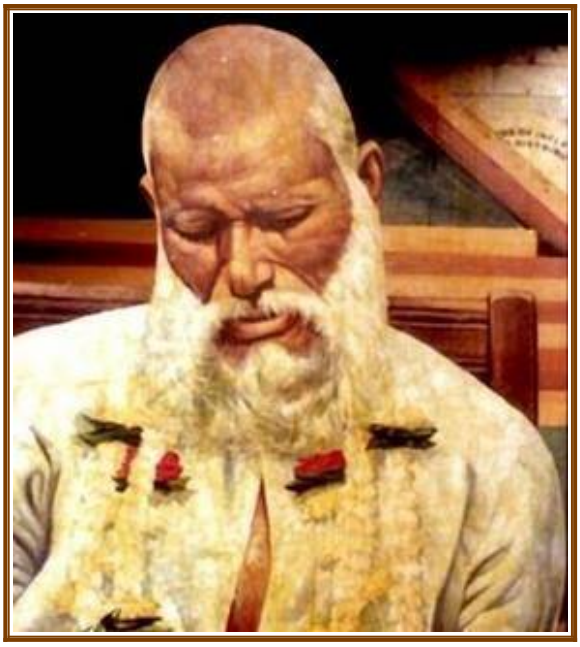
At an individual level, thought is described as an 'ego-psyche'. Each one comprises an accumulation of thoughts based on our individual experiences, which include our communications and interactions with others. Stars and other particles in nature are similar in this respect. It rarely occurs to us, or we are not fully conscious of the fact that thoughts are continuously exchanged between all stars, planets, and indeed all particles, creatures, and beings in the universe through the process of thinking.

While still staring at the sky, Baba Sahib continued:

We are closely connected to the galaxies and have an intimate link with them. The thoughts that emerge incessantly in our

minds often originate from distant habitations by means of light waves. These waves carry various impressions, which become our notions, ideas, and concepts. Although we consider them our own, it is not so. The thinking patterns of all creatures, therefore, have a common source, which is the ocean of all the mental impressions around them. Knowledge of this and the potential to exploit it, however, depend on the level of consciousness of a species and the awareness of its individuals.

To demonstrate this point, Baba Sahib asked the *raja* to be aware of the underlying notions, ideas, and concepts formed as archetypes or mental impressions in our minds while experiencing the material world. This shows we are indeed familiar with them, and we mentally deal with things composed of pure light on a regular basis. The mental impressions are moulded into recognisable patterns, which are then absorbed by the conscious mind according to our individual capacity.



The *raja* gained much insight from what the great spiritual master, Baba Tajuddin, revealed about the secrets whispered by nature. It was a privilege to know how we are connected with other beings and systems in the universe and the role of thinking and thoughts in our perceptions, interactions, and experiences. However, Baba Sahib stressed to him the need for profound contemplation to understand this secret properly. He also pointed out the inherent weakness of human beings, who are unable to exploit their potential on their own. He emphasised the importance of our connection with angels and jinns and expanding our scope of thinking. Other beings were created to fill the voids in our thinking patterns, and we rely on each other to be more complete. In particular, our inner aspects, which are hidden from our conscious minds but remain in mutual contact with their counterparts throughout the universe, help us to overcome the restrictions of time and space.

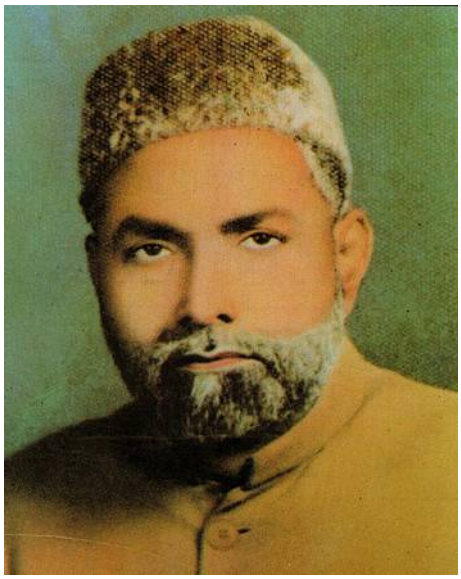
Nature's Secrets: Manifestation

The same single subconscious functions throughout the universe... It is this cosmic subconscious state that enables us to perceive and comprehend realities when there is sustained attention.

Continuing on the topic of angels and jinns being most like us humans, Baba Tajuddin told the *raja* that these three creatures mentioned in the scriptures are present in all galaxies in the universe. Together, we are a 'creative force' dispersed throughout it because we play a significant role in the process of creation. We propagate waves of inspiration, "which, upon attaining a certain state after covering some distance, manifest the things they represent in a material form". He clarified further:

> *Thoughts, the ego-psyche, and individuals are one and the same. They may appear to be different, but they are not. As for what it is, it is that entity that comprises numerous forms or moulds of moods, conditions, states, feelings, and faculties, each of which has its own particular form. Nature has accumulated so many of these forms, and each individual has multiple layers of them encased in a single body. This is true for humans, angels, and jinns alike, who are combinations of thousands of such layers, each a separable entity by itself. This is what distinguishes them from other creatures. The universe has both single and multi-layered beings.*
>
> *Within a species of the same kind, the number of layers is the same, but some are vibrant and bright, whereas others are less so. While some of these layers are active on the surface, others are not because they are hidden or dormant. The active ones manifest as discoveries and disclosures. They are grasped by our consciousness, so we perceive their role with awareness. However, it is the hidden ones in our subconsciousness that are more significant, as it is their functioning that creates the various manifestations in our universe.*

An explanation



Qalandar Baba Awliya

Many years later, Qalandar Baba Awliya elaborated on the ego-psyche and the single subconscious. Human beings are used to communicating from the beginning of their lives. When we converse, sound waves are produced to convey the intended meanings, which are then interpreted by listeners. Our ego-psyche waves interact in the same way. For instance, dumb people communicate by making slight movements of their lips, and lip-readers can understand what they mean to say. Similarly, animals can express their feelings, even without using sound, by engaging directly by means of ego-psyche waves. Trees can communicate with each other irrespective of the distances between them, and these conversations take place not only between nearby ones but also between trees situated far away from each other. The mineral kingdom, which includes stones, pebbles, and dust particles, communicates with each other in the same way.

The way many prophets, sages, and others with spiritual powers communicate telepathically shows that the same single subconscious functions throughout the universe. Every single wave in the seen and *ghayb* dimensions is capable of interpreting thoughts, even if separated by a huge distance. Perceiving and making sense of these thoughts leads to being able to handle the very fabric of the universe. By reflecting deeply and honing in on this network, which we ourselves are an integral part of, we can explore the circumstances and conditions of life on our own as well as on other planets. We can know the thoughts of other beings, including animals, the activities of angels and jinns, and the internal stimuli of plants and minerals. This is all possible when the non-corporeal aspect of our being is emancipated from the grip of our ego. It is this cosmic subconscious state that enables us to perceive and comprehend realities when there is sustained attention, and it preserves what it perceives in the conscious mind as far as is needed.

Nature's Secrets: Dukhaan

> Together with angels and jinns, we produce all the manifestations necessary to sustain the universe by means of thoughts... the ego-psyche, or thought waves, are omnipresent throughout the boundless expanse.

Baba Tajuddin revealed more secrets to the *raja*, who continued to listen with great interest. So far, Baba Sahib revealed the similarities, as human beings, to angels and jinns, how we are connected with and rely on one another, and the role of thoughts. He had already told him that human beings inhabit countless planets, and although there are variations, they are essentially the same, and the same is true for angels and jinns. Together with angels and jinns, we produce all the manifestations necessary to sustain the universe by means of thoughts.

The *raja* was also fascinated to learn about how the species of humans, angels, and jinns differ fundamentally from each other. Baba Sahib explained the difference in terms of *dukhaan*:

> *The universe is an expanse formed from the intermingling of the various ego-psyches or thoughts of individuals, and time and space are merely variations of them. The result of the wave-based interactions is the formation of what the Holy Quran calls 'dukhaan', which is invisible smoke. It is the basis of all manifestations, although our knowledge of it is still in its infancy. Human beings are products of positive dukhaan, which is a sweetness circulating in large quantities in human blood; jinns are products of negative dukhaan, which is salinity; and angels are compounded forms produced from the essence of both. Together, the three types are the foundations of both the visible and invisible dimensions of the cosmos. This system is free from fluctuations that would cause conscious and subconscious life to cease.*

An explanation

From the teachings of Qalandar Baba Awliya, we can learn more practical implications of utilising this knowledge of *dukhaan*. For

example, we can learn how to manage our levels of *dukhaan*; how ego-psyche waves function, and how to take advantage of the single subconscious that pervades the entire universe, for instance, to communicate with other beings. Baba Tajuddin himself was a living example for the *raja*, confirming that all this was indeed possible, and he now had a better understanding of *how* he was able to do what he did.

If the quantity of positive *dukhaan* is reduced in a person, and the negative quantity is increased to produce a greater overall quality of salinity, then jinn-like abilities are aroused, and the person becomes able to behave like them. If the positive quantity is increased instead, and the negative quantity is decreased to produce a greater overall quality of sweetness, then this creates heaviness. The person feels grounded and may also gain weight. This law applies to angels, too. If the positive *dukhaan* exceeds a certain level, they take on more human qualities, and if the negative *dukhaan* exceeds a certain level, they take on the qualities of jinns. Both positive and negative *dukhaan* levels would need to be reduced for a human being to behave more like an angel and become temporarily emancipated from spatio-temporal constraints. This is not as difficult to achieve, as it might seem. The person only has to drastically reduce their intake of both salt and sugar. If only the quantity of sugar is reduced, they can achieve the same emancipation as jinns. However, before such practise is done, it is vital to seek the guidance of a spiritual expert.

It should be borne in mind that much of the thinking that enters our minds is not necessarily related directly to our affairs. These thoughts may belong to any near or distant being from anywhere in the universe. They reach us by means of waves, and when we try to link them to our lives, it might be in vain. Therefore, it is necessary to bear some things in mind regarding how ego-psyche waves function. Scientists consider light to be the only thing with the maximum possible speed. However, ordinary light is not swift or fast enough to eliminate spatio-temporal constraints. In contrast, the ego-psyche, or thought waves, are omnipresent throughout the boundless expanse. Spatial distances and temporal intervals required for ordinary light waves to travel lie within their folds, so they are not restricted or otherwise affected by them.

Nature's Secrets: The Moon

"The moon is present, in its place, in its entirety... Consider the veil between you and the moon, which is there to maintain the system of consciousness... In a similar way, the circle of consciousness keeps expanding and contracting."

On one of the nights when Baba Tajuddin revealed secrets to his close *mureed*, Raja Raghuji Rao, he asked whether he had ever noticed the moon. He confirmed he had indeed seen the moon many times, so the master asked him to describe what it looked like. Raja Sahib imagined an image of the moon in his mind and became so engrossed that he delayed responding verbally to describe what he was seeing.

The scene in which the *raja* was lost displayed a glowing white moon against a dark black sky to produce a stark contrast. Rather than a separation, however, the thin and thick streaks of the moon's milky rays were merged with the blackness. The strange union was intoxicating. While lost in the enchantment of the moon, the *raja* eventually uttered, "Magical!"

Baba Sahib then said, in a rather loud voice, "*Zabardast*! You have encapsulated it well."

Upon hearing these words of praise, the *raja* felt proud of having described his experience in a way that earned him his master's praise. However, the elation quickly subsided and wiped away the smile on his face when the master added, "The way you are seeing the moon is indeed magical, but it is an illusion".

Raja Sahib immediately turned his gaze from his master's angelic face towards the moon visible on the horizon from the window. Its rays were dispersed so delicately that they made the stars intoxicating. A flock of clouds then passed by until they covered the moon. The master asked, "What do you see now?"

Maharaja Raghuji Rao Bhonsle V

The *raja* instinctively replied, "Today, the moon is on its eleventh day".

With a gentle smile on his face, the master asked, "What day was the moon when the covering clouds passed by it like mountains?"

The *raja* took a moment to gauge the meaning and depth of his master's words and was numbed. After hesitating for a while, he remarked, "The moon was no longer visible. It had disappeared."

Baba Sahib responded by asking, "Okay! Does disappearing mean that it ceases to exist?"

The *raja* clarified, "No, it was behind the clouds. The clouds had covered it."

The master then spoke at length. He said:

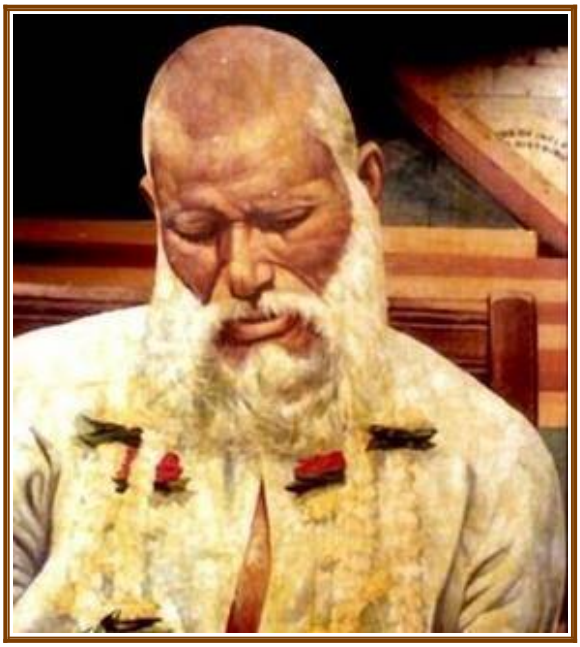
> *Son! In this case, what evidence is there that the moon we thought was of the eleventh day is indeed of the eleventh day? Observe closely! The moon is present, in its place, in its entirety, is it not? You can only see a part of it, and the rest of it is hidden from your sight. Consider the veil between you and the moon, which is there to maintain the system of consciousness on a daily basis. This veil keeps expanding, so you see less and less of it until a very thin line remains, which you would call the crescent moon of the first day. Another cycle then begins where the veil shrinks gradually until the moon is in a state you call a 'full moon'. In a similar way, the circle of consciousness keeps expanding and contracting.*

When Baba Sahib finished his marvellous explanation, the *raja* asked, "Does the veil lift from the moon or from my eyes?"

The master replied, "I have brought you this far. Now, you must discover and understand what else there is to know for yourself."

An explanation

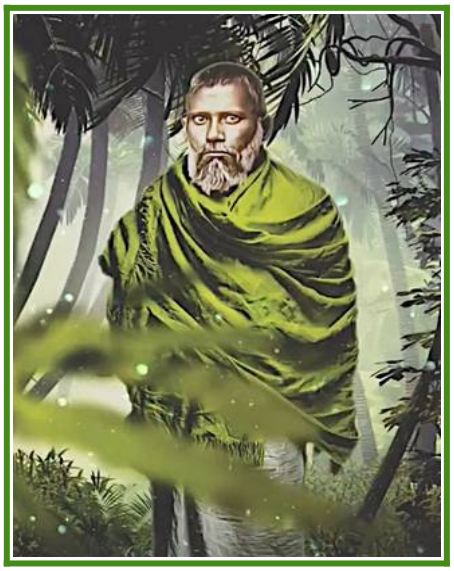
As explained by Qalandar Baba Awliya, these teachings of Baba Tajuddin draw our attention to the fact that everything we see through the physical 'eye of illusion' is contrary to reality. The presumption is rather astounding that mankind accepts the illusion as real and declares it as knowledge with great conviction. What the eye sees is subject to growth and decline in those aspects that are apparent, whereas the hidden aspects are ignored. It also gives an impression of division into different stages or parts, making one lose their individuality and sense of separation. These phases of expansion and contraction are erroneously interpreted as changes or continuous alterations in our conscious minds, whereas reality always remains the same. While our consciousness remains confined, it associates the day with light and the night with darkness, and during these intervals, we observe growth and decline.



Importantly, the sight of those who believe in and witness realities is free of earthbound consciousness and profoundly aware of the consciousness of the heavens. They are able to see other worlds and can travel there without requiring material resources. The heavens form a dimensionless vault without indication of where it begins or ends. It extends in every direction. Compared to earthbound consciousness, when a person focuses on limitlessness or infinity, the awareness of the self or one's individuality dissipates. Annihilation in the infinite God makes the mind lose any sense of fear or sorrow or attachment to temporary and perishable things, and there is no joy anymore in acquiring them either. The thinking pattern of those who reflect deeply and ponder when seeing the limitless sky becomes neutralised, and this ultimately leads to gaining self-sufficiency and liberation through God-dependency and unwavering reliance on God for your needs. When the veils of illusion are lifted, it is like how the moon is seen, neither waxing nor waning, in all its true glory.

The Tiger in Waki Woods

Suddenly, a stretched figure of a tiger could be seen climbing and edging closer... The ego-psyche, or thought waves, that were being transferred back and forth between them prompted them to encounter each other again and again.



One day during the hot summer season, Baba Tajuddin, along with a few others in a small group, went to climb a hill in the thick woods of Waki Shareef. His grandson, Muhammad Azeem, was among them. Baba Tajuddin suddenly turned around and said smilingly, "Mian! He who is afraid of tigers, he may leave. I myself will rest here for a while. It is likely that the tiger will come. It is entirely up to it how long it wishes to stay. You may go if you wish, or eat and drink and enjoy yourselves!"

After hearing what their master had to say, a few of the people hid themselves wherever they could find a place to hide. But most of them quickly escaped from the woods altogether. That is, they fled from the true refuge of their master's presence. The shade of trees and a cool breeze provided a tranquil atmosphere for those who stayed. Azeem chose to remain behind. By now, his grandfather was lying on the ground. His eyes were closed.

The air was filled with rumbling noises. After a short period of heightened anticipation that something frightful was going to happen, a sense of dread overcame the woods. It was not in anticipation of a *sadhu*, yogi, saint, or other holy person; rather, it was for the appearance of a beast who, it seemed, was slowly approaching the area.

When Azeem set his eyes on his grandfather, suddenly, a stretched figure of a tiger could be seen climbing and edging closer – very slowly, gracefully, and respectfully toward his feet. The tiger was looking intently at his grandfather with its eyes half-closed. It soon reached very

close to his feet and started licking his soles. Baba Tajuddin was in a state of deep sleep, seemingly unaware of what was happening.

A little while later, the tiger shut its eyes in an ecstatic state and placed its head on the ground. Azeem's grandfather was still asleep. The tiger gathered its strength and resumed licking his feet, whereupon Babaji's eyes opened. He sat up, stroked the tiger's head, and said, "You came. You are well and healthy now. I am very pleased to see you like this. Now go!" The tiger wagged its tail in gratitude and left. It was the same tiger whose supplication was accepted by virtue of the saint's presence [see A Tiger's Supplication].

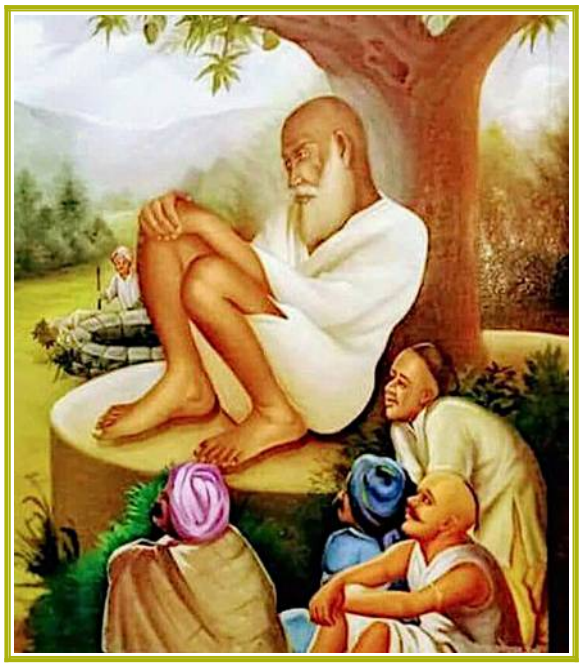
Many years later, when Muhammad Azeem himself became a spiritual master like his grandfather, he told the story of the Waki Woods tiger who came to meet his grandfather to his close *mureed* Shamsuddin. It made Shamsuddin ponder a lot. He thought no one else knew that the tiger had come to meet Baba Tajuddin before and that perhaps the two were already mentally acquainted with each other. He understood that there could be only one explanation for this mutual acquaintance. The ego-psyche, or thought waves, that were being transferred back and forth between them prompted them to encounter each other again and again.

Shamsuddin realised that this is how spiritual disclosures occur in gnostics. However, from this episode of the tiger coming to meet Baba Tajuddin in the hilly woods of Waki, it was clear that animals can also undergo such an experience in the same manner. So, as far as disclosure is concerned, both humans and animals can be considered alike.

Leaves that Turned into Insects

"If only you understood!... It contains all the elements that give life... All these things only become visible when you care to gaze closely into its interior. Understand that... life arises from itself, and that life is contained within life."

It was Baba Tajuddin's routine to often spend long periods of time sitting quietly under a tree in Sakardara with his head inclined downward in a meditative pose. People would gather around him and wait in anticipation for him to give them attention. Some were fortunate in that they did not have to wait too long, but some had to wait longer than usual. On some occasions, he would be so absorbed that no movement could be detected in his body, and visitors had to wait for several hours or even all day. Some were patient when this happened, but some also left in disappointment.



One morning, when Hayat Khan went to meet Baba Tajuddin, the saint sat motionless in one place for so long that several hours had passed. Hayat tried to give him some tea and lunch, but he couldn't. So he went off to Maryam Amma and complained in an officer's tone, "Baba Sahib has not drunk tea or had anything to eat since the morning. I've been unable to do anything about it, in spite of offering him food. Now, tell me what else I can do? I'm worried he might not eat at all today!"

Maryam was equally worried about the matter, if not more so. She thought for a while, then muttered the kind of deep absorption called *istighraq* that had captivated him. She understood this state, as she was familiar with it herself, but was concerned for the people waiting for him this time. The two kept waiting in anticipation for their master to return

soon. However, on this occasion, two, then three, days had passed, and still, there was no sign of his coming back. Let alone the tea or food they provided for him; even water would not pass beyond his lips. The guests waiting for the saint had long since moved to a place specially arranged for visitors nearby. They waited for him regardless of the heat or cold and whether it rained or not. Hayat Khan noticed that the saint's absorption was creating ripples of joy in the minds of the waiting guests. He was sure of the source of their delight that was making them feel the way they were feeling. In fact, he was quite familiar with the pleasure of such deep faith himself. Seeing the people's *sabr* made him glad, but he wanted to uncover what was actually happening.

Baba Tajuddin's eyes opened a little while remaining in a state of deep absorption. Hayat Khan tried to peer into them with great passion to see what was going on. He called Muhammad Azeem, who was also present among the people, over and told him to look carefully at a leaf. Azeem looked around at the many leaves. He saw the same thing. He saw the appearance of facial features, and tiny eyes and legs emerged from them. The leaves were about three inches in size. The same transformations were taking place in all of them. Two of the leaves started to walk, one behind the other. Within a matter of two minutes, the leaves had lost their resemblance to normal leaves. They marched toward the trunk of the tree, and Baba Tajuddin's eyes were fixated on them.

For some days thereafter, Hayat Khan kept singing hymns in praise of what he witnessed. They began with the words:

> *Parbhoor dhan dhan qudrat teri.*
>
> *The master, so absorbed, tamed nature, which became all his.*

Several months later, Azeem asked his grandfather about this event when the leaves turned into insects. Baba Tajuddin explained:

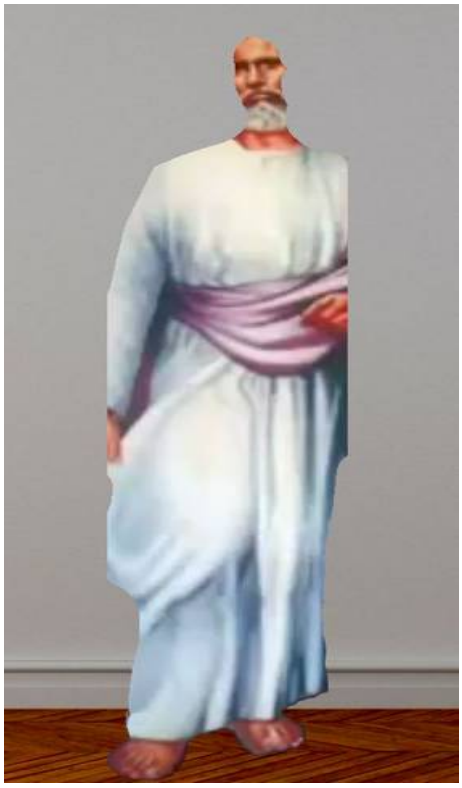
> *If only you understood! Look, there is a tree. It contains all the elements that give life, including the capacity to see, hear, comprehend, and move about. All these things only become visible when you care to gaze closely into its interior. Every one of its leaves has a mouth and limbs already. It is just that you don't notice it until you interact with them, but ordinary people cannot accomplish this feat. Whenever a leaf embraces me, it becomes an insect capable of walking about. Understand that it embraces by its sight, that life arises from itself, and that life is contained within life.*

Passing through a Wall

One day, Azeem noticed that his grandfather walked straight through a wall... Since the body is subject to the mind, the solidity of the wall posed no barrier for him passing right through it.

Once, it so happened that, as Muhammad Azeem recalled, the wall of his house collapsed after a heavy rainfall. His father was away working as a clerk in Delhi, and the landlord was unwilling to rebuild the wall. Considering the situation, his maternal grandfather Nana Tajuddin, who was staying at Raja Raghuji Rao's palace at the time, wrote a letter to his father to have him and his mother Saeedah, who was Baba Tajuddin's niece, sent to Nagpur.

An arrangement was made for their accommodation in a place where Nana Tajuddin would visit every other day on his *baggi* to spend a few hours with them. It was common in those days for people in the locality to visit the place as well, whenever Baba Tajuddin would pay a visit. Babaji only had to know briefly about a matter, and they were left dumbfounded when it was resolved there and then.

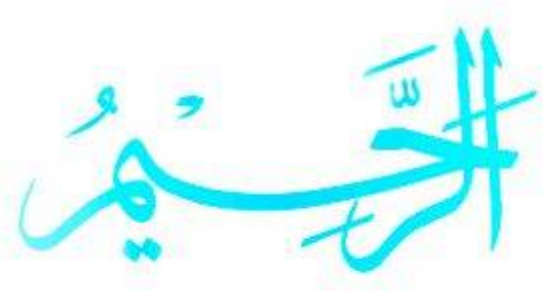


One day, Azeem noticed that his grandfather walked straight through a wall instead of passing through an open door. On the other side was his *baggi*, waiting on the street outside. The wall was solid, and it was not possible for an ordinary person to do the same. Azeem thought that this must have happened unintentionally because his grandfather's mind, while absorbed in other people's matters, tended to become engrossed in divine emanations. It numbed his physical senses. Since the body is subject to the mind, the solidity of the wall posed no barrier for him passing right through it.

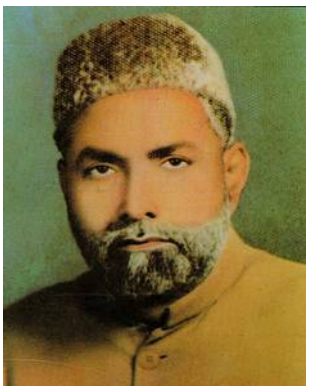
Reviving the Dead

To harness its attributes requires reflecting on these attributes of Ar-Raheem so that they are present in the person's essence to some degree. That person then gains the ability to revive the dead.

There are many cases of the Crown of Saints, Baba Tajuddin of Nagpur, reviving the dead. For instance, he once revived a tea seller named Gulab [see Brought Back from the Dead], a girl named Girja Bai [see Tea for a Dead Girl], and a singer named Surji [see The Sleeping Singer]. He also revived animals, including his own dog Sheru [see Sheru the Guide Dog], another dog and a fox [see Empathy with Animals], and a calf [see Kicked Back to Life].



Some decades later, in Karachi, Qalandar Baba Awliya related these episodes to his students. Afterwards, he explained how his grandfather was able to give life to the dead. Among the names of God is the name Ar-Raheem (The All Merciful or Compassionate). To harness its attributes requires reflecting on these attributes of Ar-Raheem so that they are present in the person's essence to some degree. That person then gains the ability to revive the dead. The Holy Quran gives the example of Prophet Isa (as), who was able to do the same.



Qalandar Baba Awliya

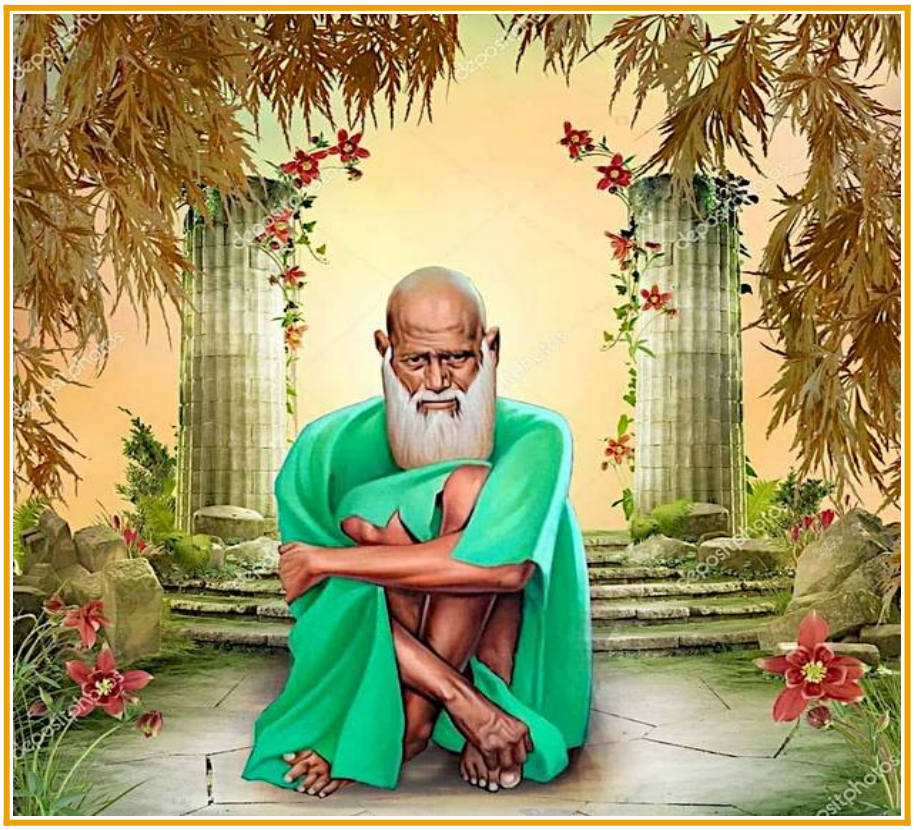
For developing this ability, Qalandar Baba advised meditating with the specific intention of increasing the attributes associated with the divine name Ar-Raheem. After all, every shape and form in the world is a blend of certain lights from this attribute. This person can then exercise his authority and remould the shape or form as desired or revive someone to give life to a dead being and thereby extend their period of physical existence.

Fondness for Poetry and Naats

Baba Tajuddin, too, was very fond of Sufi poetry, particularly of Shaykh Saadi Shirazi and Mawlana Rumi... [He] also had the ability to express himself poetically to a fine degree... Baba Tajuddin uttered many mystical words worth noting by spiritual seekers.

Those with sharp thinking and observation skills and the ability to perceive things and comprehend deeply, combined with a sensitive personality, tend to be fond of poetry. Some of them manifest their capacity as poets. This medium of communication allows for complex matters and detailed thoughts to be expressed concisely in a few simple words and lines. Many poets have penned their thoughts throughout history. Among them have been pious and holy persons, including Sufis, with their intimate knowledge of God.

Baba Tajuddin, too, was very fond of Sufi poetry, particularly of Shaykh Saadi Shirazi and Mawlana Rumi. He would often read the former's famous quatrain referring to Prophet Muhammad (uwbp), in which the fourth part was completed by the Holy Prophet (uwbp) himself, as instructed to Shaykh Saadi in a dream. He would ask the gathering to join in and read it in chorus:



Balaghal ula bikamaalihi, kashafaduja bijamaalihi, hasunat jamee'u khisaalihi, sallu 'alayhi wa aalihi.

Exalted by his perfection, having dispelled the darkness by his beauty, how beauteous his qualities are, benedictions be on him and his family.

Baba Tajuddin was also particularly fond of *naats* and frequently held *naat mehfils* (gatherings) in which devotees would gather to read in praise of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (uwbp). A popular *dua* he would often make before closing such gatherings was the Farsi *dua*, also devised by Shaykh Saadi:

Karimaa be bakhsaai barhaale maa, ke hastam aseere kamande hawaa, nadaraem ghayraaz tu faryaade ras, tui 'asiyaan raa khataa bakhsh-o-bas, nigehedaar maa raaz raahe khataa, khataa dar guzaar-o- sawaabam numaa.

O Bountiful One, have mercy on our condition, for we are confined in the snare of worldly desires. We have none but You to whom we can turn, as You suffice as the forgiver for all sinners. Keep us on the path that leads to You. Forgive our sins and convert them to good deeds.

Baba Tajuddin also had the ability to express himself poetically to a fine degree. However, due to spending so much time in *istighraq*, he did not follow the norms of poetry, and he did not have his poetic words written down. Most of his poetry thus fell into obscurity. Still, there were some poetical lines that were heard widely enough that some people managed to preserve them. He spoke poetically under the name Dasmalu, which means 'slave of God'. Here are some lines Baba Tajuddin uttered poetically:

Formation of human beings

On the formation of human beings, Baba Tajuddin would say:

Maans ha sab aatma, maans ha sab raakh, Bandi ki ginti nahi, bandi me sao laakh

Humans are formed entirely of spirit but also of matter, Just as a cypher gives intrinsic value to any number.

In these lines, Baba Tajuddin points out that man is not only composed of the earth but also of light, as is the whole universe. Seeing man

identify himself with only the earth is constraining. Once he becomes intimately aware of his spiritual nature, the grip of space is broken, and by exercising his willpower, he becomes able to manipulate the natural world.

Acquiring sustenance

On acquiring sustenance, Baba Tajuddin would say:

> *Ajgar karen na chakaree panchi karen na kaam, Daas milu ka kha gae sb ke daata raam.*
>
> *Beasts 'n' birds toil not to earn a living, yet still manage to acquire sustenance,*
>
> *Let it be known to all and sundry that it is God who provides.*

In these lines, Baba Tajuddin reminds us of our relationship with God and how He provides for everyone. We humans strive and struggle to earn a living, yet we worry about meeting our material needs. The lifestyle of beings in the animal kingdom is more carefree. Yet, animals still manage to get their sustenance. It shows the need for us to become more self-sufficient and dependent on God for our needs.

Worship and piety

On the importance of avoiding idol worship, Baba Tajuddin would say:

> *Daam door ki res me raam karat gun gae, Par bhooki sau gandhe dusht usse mil pae.*
>
> *Those who praise and worship physical idols gain the devil instead of finding God.*

On those who show themselves to be pious:

> *Zahir parast Allah ki tasbih aur 'ibaadat ka dekhawa karta ha, Allah ki qasam! Usko Allah to nahi mil sakta, albatta Shaytan usse mil jata ha.*
>
> *Those who pretend to be pious by remembering God, They gain none other than Shaytan, I swear by God.*
>
> -
>
> *Tan papi man ka hira, ujiyare sab kes, Mandar ka depak nahi, raushaniyon ka sa bhes.*

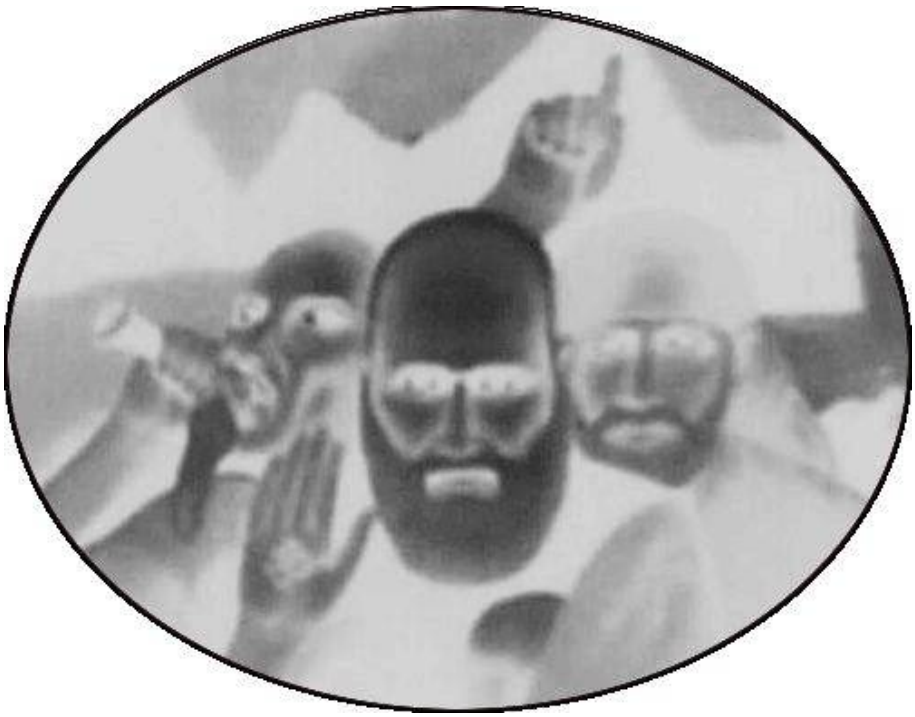
White hair may conceal a body stained by sins with a blackened heart, But the stainless appearance of piety alone does not illumine such a heart.

Mystical utterances

Baba Tajuddin uttered many mystical words worth noting by spiritual seekers. Some were said during the night to a Vedantist [see Within the Mirror]. On his preoccupation with observing and interacting with hidden aspects, Baba Tajuddin would say:

Sae ban ki raat me ban baasi ban jae, Daas milu ka saath me jaagen aur lahraen.

Dwellers' shadows in woods at night become like men, Tajuddin awakens and converses merrily with them.



These lines belong to the period when Baba Tajuddin used to visit the shrine of Baba Makki. Baba Tajuddin said that natural phenomena only appear to be motionless as if there is no life in them, but in reality, there is life in them as well. The habit of worshipping during the night helps reveal the innermost nature of things. Baba Tajuddin was fond of being absorbed in witnessing the hidden aspects when they became animated, and he was able to interact with them.

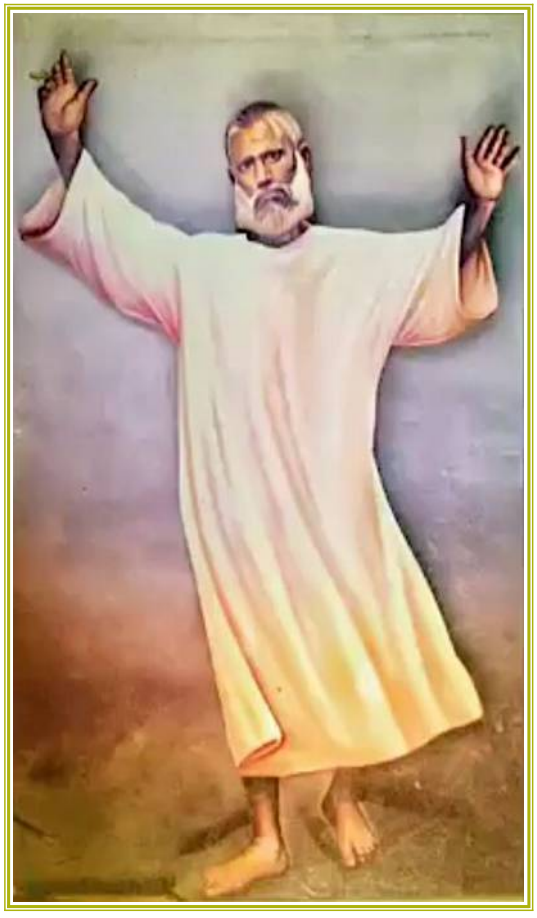
Mehfil-e-Samaa

Qawwalis have the power to liberate listeners from worldly desires and direct their attention to God. Like poetry that can be used to express spiritual truths, qawwali is also a medium for conveying ideas and feelings, as it can affect listeners profoundly.

One day, Fareed Khan Fiza visited Baba Tajuddin while the saint was staying at Waki Shareef. At that time, Babaji was inside the villa, listening to two *qawwals* perform. A *mehfil-e-samaa* (spiritual euphony session) was being held. He was very fond of *qawwali*. When the man entered, his master was listening quietly to the following words being repeated:

Bhar bhar jaam pilaade saqi.

Give us a filled goblet to drink, O Cupbearer!



The *qawwals* were creating an unusual frenzy among the listeners. They also bore an extraordinary influence on the man who just entered. Fareed thought to himself that benevolence is available to the entire human race, and the whole world is deriving benefits from it. He was desirous of getting a chunk, too.

As soon as this wish arose, Baba Tajuddin ordered his devotee Fareed to bring a glass of water. When he gave his master the glass of water, Babaji took a couple of sips and handed it back to Fareed to drink the rest. Fareed then wished in his heart to gain a more stable and attentive state of meditative awareness (*sulook*) rather than absorption without awareness (*jazb*) or a deeper enraptured state of trance or ecstasy (*wajd*). As Fareed was about to drink the water, Babaji

took the glass from him and drank more of the water himself before giving the remainder back to Fareed to drink. Babaji knew best what portion to allot or was suitable for his devotee.

When the same feeling arose once more in Fareed, Baba Sahib again took the glass from him before returning it for the third time with only a little water remaining inside it. If Fareed had drunk the water even by the third time, he would have gained what he wanted, but the feeling emerged once more. This time, Baba Sahib was in a temper because the man was losing his opportunity. He took hold of the glass and threw it on the ground, which interrupted the *qawwali*.

Types of samaa and degrees of awareness

It is worth pondering why Baba Tajuddin and Sufis, in general, are fond of *qawwalis*. This form of devotion is a source of comfort for perturbed minds and distressed hearts. *Qawwalis* have the power to liberate listeners from worldly desires and direct their attention to God. Like poetry that can be used to express spiritual truths, *qawwali* is also a medium for conveying ideas and feelings, as it can affect listeners profoundly.

The master once explained that there are two kinds of *samaa* in terms of heaviness and impact. One is called *hajim* (aggressive), and the other is called *ghayr hajim* (non-aggressive). The first kind is heavy, as it produces a quick seizure or enrapture. The listener is affected early in the session or when a certain pleasant verse delights them. It is difficult to describe further, as it has to be experienced to be properly understood. The second kind creates more controlled, uplifted states of mind and soul, or a gentle ecstasy, upon hearing a certain verse.

This distinction is analogous to the grades or degrees of awareness identified by Fareed when he expressed which type he preferred and the quantity of water in the glass that was given to him on each occasion. As the master said, “A *samaa* is a test for listeners”. This is because of how much a *qawwali* affects a listener and what type and depth of expanded awareness it induces can be experienced during a session of spiritual euphony.

Within the Mirror

"He's in my heart whenever I glimpse within, My divine self is clearer when I look within." ...The Beloved is to be found within the mirror we always carry around inside of us.

A Vendantist from Jhansi used to come to Sakardara and stay with Kareem Baba [see Ocean of Spiritual Grace], one of Baba Tajuddin's closest *mureeds*, for opportunities to meet the spiritual master himself. Once, he asked about an easy way to attain salvation. Kareem Baba advised him to remember Baba Tajuddin in a graveyard with closed eyes. The man started visiting the Vedana graveyard because he was interested to see what would happen.

On the third day of trying this exercise, the Vedantist was able to hear Baba Tajuddin's angry voice, but whenever he opened his eyes, no one was around. This happened a few times until it became too unnerving for him. The man left the graveyard and was preparing to go to Sakardara to meet Baba Tajuddin in person. It was around 3am when he saw the master standing near his hut. As the man went closer, he was asked, "Who advised you to dig out big mountains?"

Baba Tajuddin gave the man a matchbox and asked him further, "Why do you knock about here and there?" He also muttered a few other words, but the man could not understand what was said. In order to communicate with the saint, the man thought that he would like him to repeat what he said more clearly. In response, Babaji slapped the man, saying, "Why do you pretend ignorance?"

Baba Tajuddin then took hold of a shawl from a bystander, instructed the man to take hold of one end and spread the shawl out on the ground. Babaji described this as a 'store', and recited the following lines of poetry:

This store of spiritual wisdom spread out for you,

The more you take, the closer the divine is to you.

He resides in our hearts, which are in His hands,

Just as my face is in this mirror in my own hands.

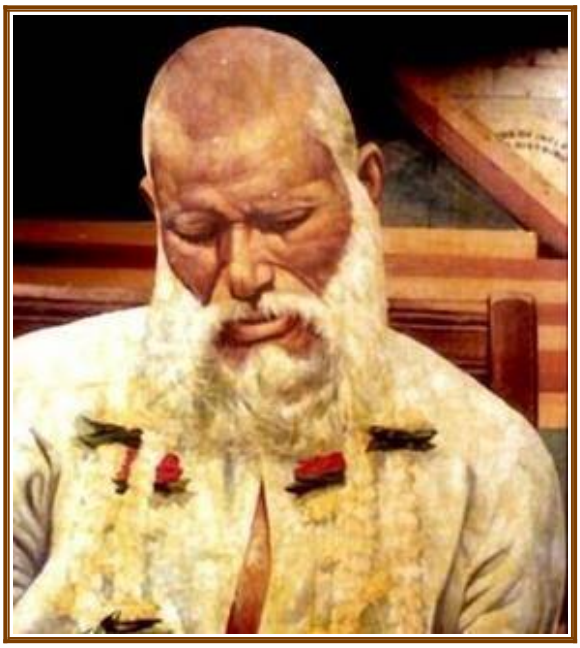
He's in my heart whenever I glimpse within,

My divine self is clearer when I look within.

Baba Tajuddin then turned to the man to explain it further:

Why, O ignorant, do you roam needlessly here and there,

When the Beloved you seek is reflected in the mirror you bear?



The point he made was that the Beloved is to be found within the mirror we always carry around inside of us. The man did not, therefore, need to visit a graveyard or any other external place to find the divine element or to attain salvation. This time in the middle of the night was very suitable for more mystical utterances, so Baba Tajuddin burst out again with the following lines to emphasise more realities:

You're the very potter; more than just the cup,

You're the soil from which is made that earthen cup,

You alone brought and drank from that earthen cup,

And you'll be gone having consumed from that cup.

Baba Tajuddin sitting on a chair in old age

Realising God

Baba Tajuddin's prime disposition was to guide people to become spiritually developed... The ultimate goal of Baba Tajuddin's teachings was to help all his mureeds realise God.

Baba Tajuddin helped multitudes of people who came to him or called for his aid, but his prime disposition was to guide people to become spiritually developed. He revealed deep spiritual teachings, for instance, on serving humanity to a medic *sadhu* [see The Medic Sadhu], controlling desires to an Arab guest [see The Arab Guest], seeking God within to a Vedantist [see Within the Mirror], and our association with the cosmos to Raghuji Rao [see Nature's Secrets: Other Beings and Nature's Secrets: Manifestation].

The need to know your self

The ultimate goal of Baba Tajuddin's teachings was to help all his *mureeds* realise God. As he said:

> *He who sees himself and realises who he is does not stop there but persists in his quest for truth and divine knowledge until he attains perfection and realises God.*

The point that you need to know your own self to realise God was made clearer by these words of his:

> *If you want to see God, the only way to achieve this is to know your self.*

Means to achieving realisation

On the means to know your self and realise God, Baba Tajuddin emphasised the path of experience. For instance, he would advise:

> *Perch on your heart in the same manner as a bird perches on its egg. This practise alone will transform you and provide you with blissful experiences.*

As for a specific method, Baba Tajuddin taught his *mureeds* to practice breath control. For instance, he advised reciting a name of God during

the inward breath and visualising your spiritual master while exhaling. On the matter of indifference, Baba Tajuddin advised to keep oneself composed during times of both pleasure and pain. He described his own experience in this regard:

> *I don't get overjoyed by happiness, nor do I sink within when there is unhappiness. Rather, I maintain my strength of mind. The visitations, whether they created happy or unhappy moments, did not mean much, but what did was the visitors who came and stayed for a while before leaving.*

Achieving realisation

One may ask how to know if realisation has been achieved. On this subject, Baba Tajuddin said if you have truly accepted your spiritual master in real faith by surrendering all your desires, then you will know you have realised God. He explained that the reason for this is that there is nothing in the seen and *ghayb* domains that a *murshid* cannot bestow on his *mureed* in an instant at any moment.

Baba Tajuddin described this progression of *fana fil-shaykh*, *fana fil-rasool,* and *fana fil-Allah*, or extinguishing one's self-identity before his shaykh, the Messenger of God (uwbp), and ultimately God (swt), as:

> *Seeing and hearing the one desired by forgetting one's own existence through deep and sincere love.*

He described *fana fil-Allah* as a kind of martyrdom whereby you live in this world constantly feeling the pangs of separation from God and leave out of sheer love for Him. He said that by surrendering yourself to God:

> *In this way, you depend solely on His will and can then be rest assured that He will take care of you in all respects and bestow on you everything on earth and in heaven, irrespective of whether you express a desire for them or not.*

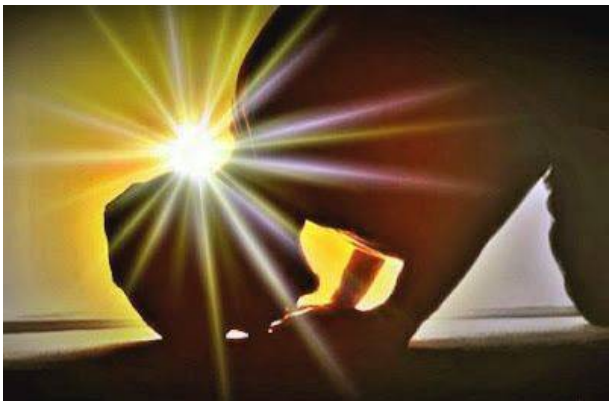
Once, Baba Tajuddin was wandering in Waki woods with a crowd of devotees when he heard some lines of a *qawwali* being sung from afar. On hearing them, he exclaimed, "That's it. That's how I lost myself, too!" The words alluded to the need to lose one's sense of individuality in the omnipresent existence of God by constantly remembering Him:

> *Only by losing himself in love does a man find himself.*

Praying as God Instructs

There is a category among the friends of God who become so engrossed in the shade of God's glory and His remembrance that they lose their worldly senses and become recipients of ilhaam... They know how and when to pray as prescribed in the books, but they also know about adapting it, as God Himself instructs.

Once, Baba Tajuddin stopped at a nearby *masjid* while travelling. The imam let him lead the *maghrib* prayer despite his dishevelled and encumbered state. However, it was not how he normally prayed when leading a congregation. It was out of the ordinary or normal routine. It was clearly abnormal, with some irregularities, and which some people considered to have been deficient, though not all. Actually, he was in a semi-ecstatic state at the time, not fully in his material senses but with the intention to also make a point to literalists participating in the same ritual.



For instance, Baba Tajuddin repeated the *ruku* and *sajdah* postures several times in succession and stood up again for a fourth cycle during the final sitting before he was supposed to end by giving *salaam*. The incident perplexed and worried some of those present in the congregation, except those familiar with his ways and sainthood, who accepted the ritual prayer's validity. In fact, the latter considered themselves fortunate to have read *namaz* behind a saint, irrespective of the variation. Among those who rejected its validity were some who decided to repeat the prayer on their own afterward. The basis for their decision was that it did not comply with the prescribed way of praying. They believed in always following written instructions literally. They waited for the *dua* to be over, but Baba Tajuddin remained seated, so they got up to pray the *farz* again themselves.

Thereupon, Baba Tajuddin also got up and made his way to exit the door. The literalists gathered around him to complain about the unusual happening. Most of them acknowledged his sainthood but wanted an explanation for the deviation in the procedure for performing the ritual prayer. They had never come across this way of praying *namaz* before. The experience was beyond their comprehension. A few considered it totally unacceptable and against the shariah. Understanding their concern, Baba Tajuddin entered the state of *jalaal* and famously said:

> *Hoji Babu, Tajuddin ke namaz par itraaz karte? Jaise kitaab me likha tum waise namaz parte, aur jaise kitab wala bolta, Tajuddin waise namaz parta.*
>
> *Now then, so you object to the way Tajuddin prayed? You pray as described in the book, whereas Tajuddin prays as its author instructs.*

Some present-day objectors may likewise have an issue with this incident, even perceiving it as detestable and condemnable. However, there is a category among the friends of God who become so engrossed in the shade of God's glory and His remembrance that they lose their worldly senses and become recipients of *ilhaam* (divine inspiration). Such exalted ones are described as *majzoob*, which literally means 'absorbed', because they conduct themselves in ways that go beyond the norm where worldly senses are engaged. They are recognised in the *hadith* as having a dishevelled appearance and strange demeanour but being in a privileged class among the friends of God [see Sahih Muslim 2854]. Their words and prayers are readily accepted by God as He listens to them.

Ordinary people, however, fail to understand this condition of spiritual magnificence and are hence confused. They only observe outward actions and are completely unaware of the spiritual connection in the hearts. They base their objections on the written words without recourse to the writer or original source to aid their understanding. In reality, Baba Tajuddin's prayer was in line with the definition of *ihsaan* (benevolence), which is to pray as if seeing God, as it establishes the required connection with Him and invites the shade of His glory. They know how and when to pray as prescribed in the books, but they also know about adapting it, as God Himself instructs.

No 'I' before 'He'

The point was that there is "no I before He", which is to say that in the presence of 'He', there is no 'I', or no 'I' or ego remains because there is only 'He' and none other than 'He'.

One day, an inquisitive visitor by the name of Sarfraz Husani asked Baba Tajuddin, "What's the truth behind the Sufi saint Mansur al-Hallaj, who was crucified for declaring, 'I am the Truth' (*ana al-haqq*)? Is he recognised as a great saint?"

Baba Tajuddin replied, "Yes, son, he was a great saint, but he had not matured. He opened his fist too soon." While showing his own fist, Baba Tajuddin continued, "Like this fist of Tajuddin, it will not be opened till the Day of Judgement". The opening of the fist symbolises the revealing of divine secrets entrusted by God to His friends, known as saints, who carry out His divine mission on earth. As for the truth of the matter put to him, which might seem to imply union with God when one's true identity is revealed, Baba Tajuddin made it clear that there is "no I before He". This is best explained by what happened on another day.

One day, Baba Tajuddin was strolling along a river bank, followed by a group of *mureeds*, one of whom was Chand Khan. He stopped at a certain place and asked Chand Khan, "When a saint is walking by, why don't you recite some praise?" Chand Khan obliged, and he started singing in praise of his master. However, on hearing the last line, Baba Tajuddin suddenly said, "Keep quiet. You are hitting me with hard stones."

Chand Khan did not understand what the matter was. It was a line in which 'He', namely God, was mentioned along with his master. Baba Tajuddin could not withstand the distinction made between 'I' and 'He', whereas the words implied there was. It was, therefore, necessary to remove this distinction. This did not mean to imply the two entities are equal, of course, but that the 'I' is extinguished in the 'He'. Baba Tajuddin thus corrected his *mureed* for attributing divinity to someone other than 'He'. The point was that there is "no I before He", which is to say that in the presence of 'He', there is no 'I', or no 'I' or ego remains because there is only 'He' and none other than 'He'.

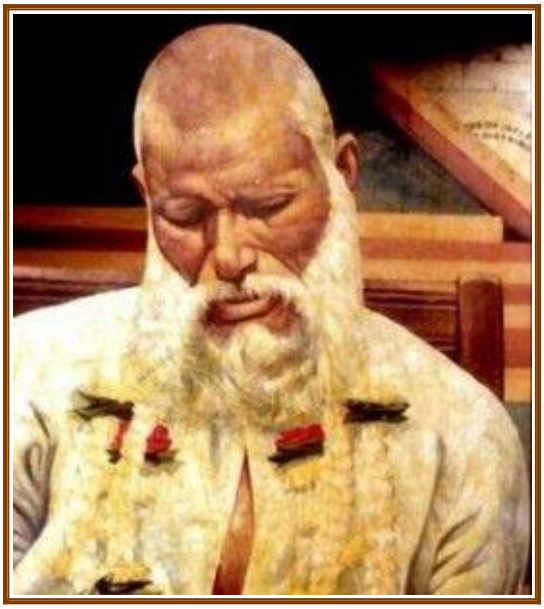
An Experience of Wajd

Suddenly, the man was enraptured in a state of spiritual ecstasy. It was precisely the kind of haal he was asking about.

One day, an inquisitive *mureed* asked the spiritual master, Baba Tajuddin, how one can enter and experience the state of spiritual ecstasy called *wajd*. He asked, "O Master! How can the *haal* (state) be experienced? What is the way to achieve it? As would be expected of a professional trainer in any discipline, Baba Tajuddin not only explained but also induced the *haal* in his *mureed* so that he could have a practical taste of the experience for himself.

In this disciple's case, Baba Tajuddin considered it appropriate to mirror his posture using his own cap. He removed his cap and put it on the floor upside down. Suddenly, the man was enraptured in a state of spiritual ecstasy. It was precisely the kind of *haal* he was asking about. He stood upside down on his head, like the position of his master's cap. It was an overwhelming experience. Baba Tajuddin then made him come out of this *haal* by turning the cap upright in its normal position. Likewise, the man was now back in his normal state, standing upright and out of the spiritual ecstasy. Baba Tajuddin then asked him, "So, how was your experience of the *haal*?"

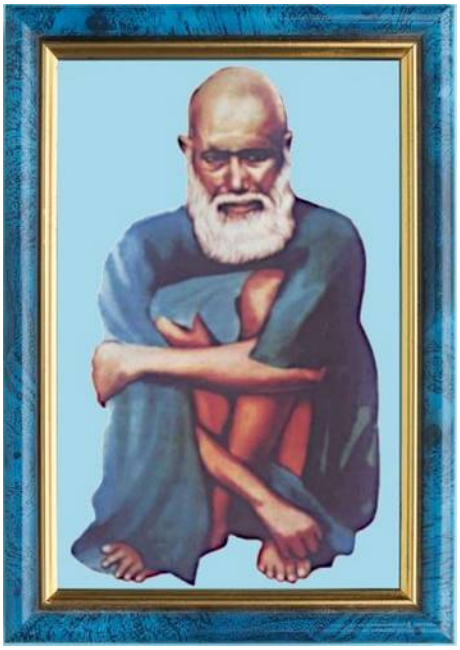
The *mureed* got on his knees in solemn satisfaction. This experience showed that the spiritual master can, at his will, magnetically induce the *haal* of *wajd* in any of his *mureeds* or other laypersons. It also shows that it is possible for one to have a taste of a mystical experience before they gain the ability to enter such a *haal* through their own efforts. However, it is also necessary to learn how to ground yourself and avoid spending too much time in wajd, as Khwaja Ali Amiruddin had to do [see Ocean of Spiritual Grace].



Baba Tajuddin in a contemplative state

The Pot and Jalebi

His love for his master, which arose from the nectar of his grace, made him succeed... he no longer needed to keep a photograph... The impression on his heart was permanent.



An employee in Jabalpur, Nilakantha Rao of Maharashtra, kept a photograph of Baba Tajuddin in his office. He gave salutations daily and offered incense regularly as well. One day, he was so engrossed in *muraqba* that he forgot to do this, so the saint appeared before him in person. This made Nilakantha so overpowered by ecstasy that he became unconscious. Everyone was awfully frightened. They called a doctor immediately, but the doctor could not understand what was wrong. The office arranged for him to be sent home. He regained consciousness the next day.

The effect of Nilakantha's experience was still visible on his face. In that state, he went to meet Baba Tajuddin in person in Nagpur. He remained there serving his master for some days. Then, Baba Tajuddin ordered him to visit a Hindu guru, Keshav Dadaji Dhuniwala of Saikheda and sent his *mureed* Karim Baba to accompany him there. While travelling there, Nilakantha became ecstatic again and started singing and dancing to the following verses:

> *There are many directions at sea, but only a few get to the shore; Whoever drinks the nectar of his master's grace is led to the shore.*
>
> *The treasure of truth takes [the voyager] all the way to the shore; Whoever recognises Muhammad as his captain is there at the shore.*

When the two men reached Saikheda, they saw Dadaji from a distance, sitting among his devotees on a raised platform. The devotees were

singing in praise of Dadaji's ability to transform with a single glance. Nilakantha was charmed by this sight, but to him, it looked like it was Baba Tajuddin. When he reached Dadaji, he got on his knees, slowly climbed the platform, and cried out loudly, "O Baba Tajuddin!"

Dadaji laughed at hearing him. He knew the man was not seeing clearly and was enamoured by the Muslim saint. Dadaji told him, "Ha ha! Tajuddin fell into a pot. Take him out if you can", and put a piece of *jalebi* into his mouth.

When Nilakantha regained some normality and became aware of where he was, Dadaji told him to realise the truth. He explained that he was seeing Baba Tajuddin in the image of Dadaji. This made Nilakantha cry in utter amazement after realising what he was seeing was not his master but a mirage. Dadaji then told him not to mistake the saint who had charmed and captivated his heart for being only in his physical body but to know that in spirit, all saints are connected. This reassured him.

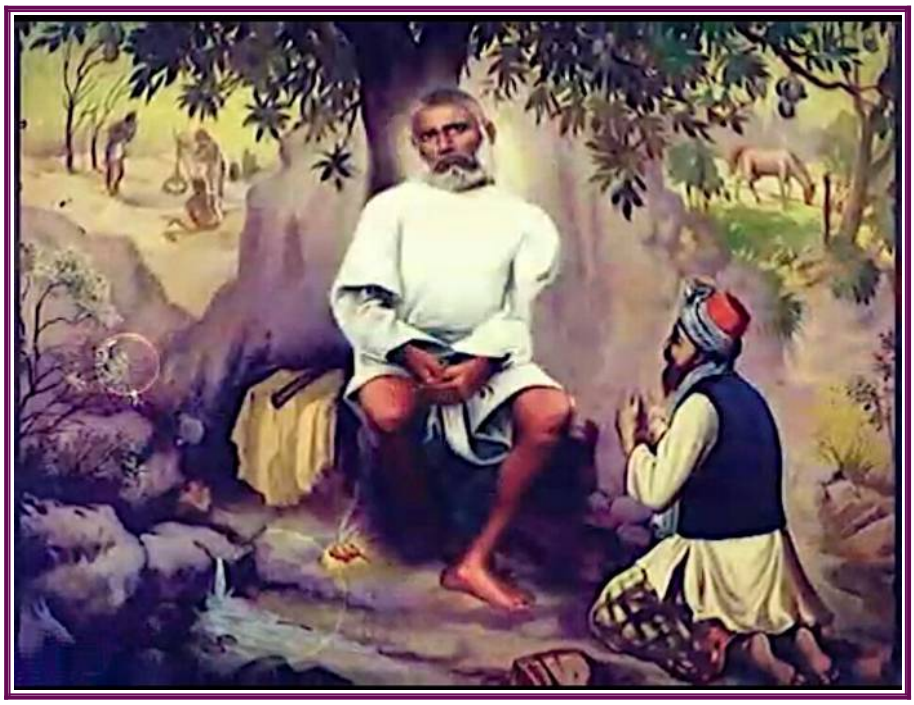
He explained further that the pot was his heart, into which he had put the image of his beloved master, Baba Tajuddin. His love for his master, which arose from the nectar of his grace, made him succeed in transferring his image from the photograph into his pot. The point was that he had progressed to the stage where he no longer needed to keep a photograph, and since it had fallen into the pot, it was not possible to take it out. The impression on his heart (*qalb*) was permanent. As for the *jalebi*, it was a gift from Dadaji in recognition of this achievement of being guided in the right direction toward the shore.

It was now necessary for the charmed one to accumulate yet more treasure in the truth so that he could maintain his composure and advance to the next stage of self-extinction from *fana fil-shaykh* to *fana fil-rasool*. After these lessons and points, Nilakantha's spiritual voyage continued, and he returned with Karim Baba to Nagpur. Like when Pownaskar was sent to several saints in turn to support his spiritual development [see From One Saint to Another], so too was it necessary for Nilakantha to receive these valuable lessons from other saints and, of course, the *jalebis*, too.

Teleported for Hajj

When the man sat down, his eyelids flickered, and his head became heavier until he was in a drowsy state. Thereupon, he found himself present in Makkah, wearing the pilgrim's robe.

An elderly man from Madras once came to meet Baba Tajuddin. When he was sitting before the saint, he requested, "*Huzoor*, many *rajas, nawabs,* and other rich persons have visited you. I've grown old, and I've never been able to go for hajj. Would you please be so kind as to arrange some money as a favour so that I can perform the hajj pilgrimage? It's my greatest wish and desire."



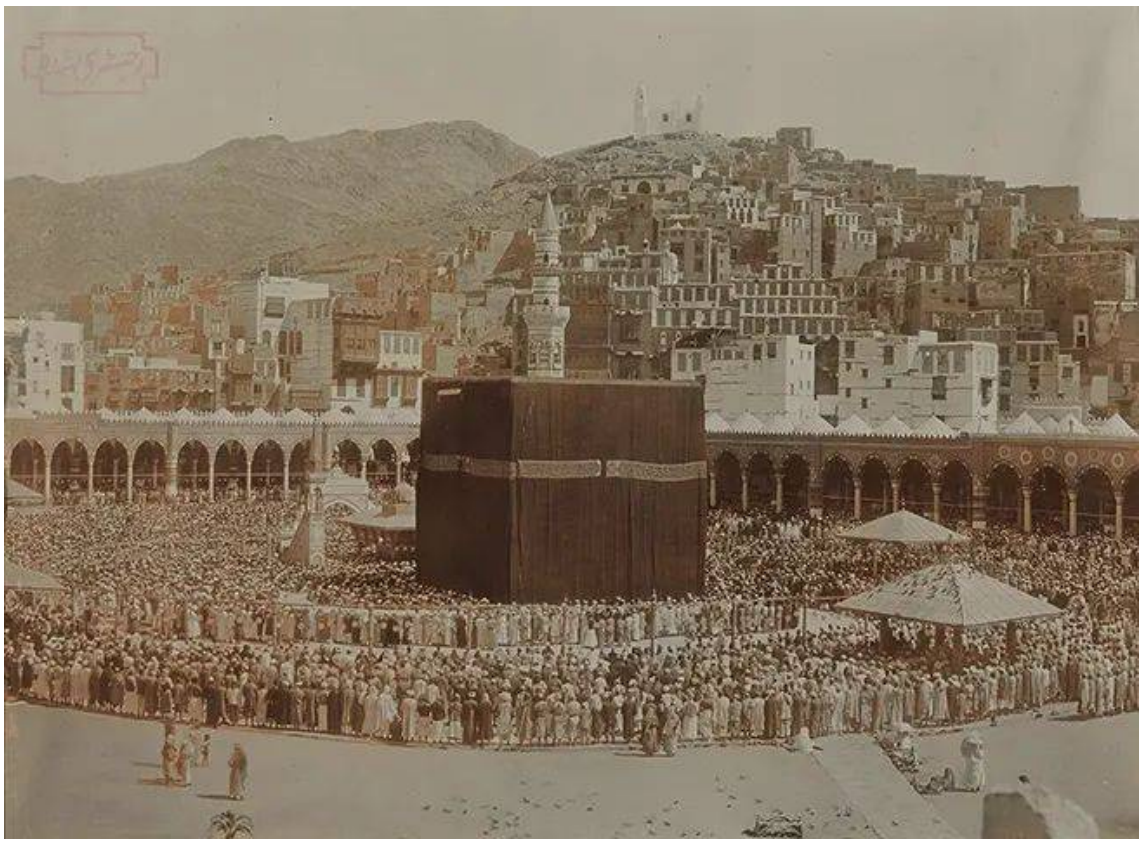
Baba Tajuddin assured the man that he would arrange for him to go for hajj. Days and weeks passed by without any news, and then the time came near for those who had arranged to go for hajj to depart. Still, Baba Tajuddin was silent in this matter. The final date for departing had come and gone. In a state of uncertainty and sadness, the man visited Baba Tajuddin again when only one day remained before the hajj. He said in a disappointed tone, "*Huzoor*, the hajj will commence tomorrow, but my wish to join the pilgrimage has not been fulfilled, and now the time for going is over".

Baba Tajuddin instructed the man to come back the next day, on the first day of the hajj. One day later, the man presented himself before Baba

Tajuddin. He was feeling more hopeful that perhaps something would be done miraculously this time. Baba Tajuddin, the saint for whom time and space were no restrictions, held the man's hand, took him a little distance away, and told him to sit down.

When the man sat down, his eyelids flickered, and his head became heavier until he was in a drowsy state. Thereupon, he found himself present in Makkah, wearing the pilgrim's robe. He performed all the rituals of the hajj pilgrimage, and when it was all over, Baba Tajuddin appeared before him and asked him whether he needed to remain there any longer. The man realised it was time to return.

When this thought arose to go back, his eyelids flickered, and he found himself in a drowsy state again, sitting in Nagpur with Baba Tajuddin standing beside him. This experience made the old man from Madras famous as one who was blessed to perform the pilgrimage by virtue of the miraculous assistance of Baba Tajuddin Nagpuri. For the rest of his days, the *haji* lived in the Tajabad area of Nagpur in deep gratitude.

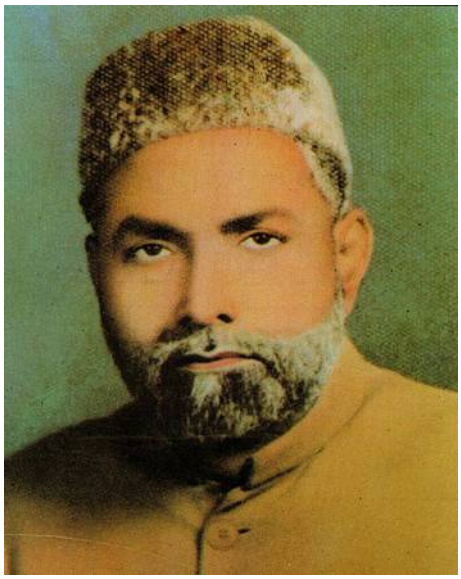


The Ka'bah in the early 20th century

An explanation

Qalandar Baba Awliya once explained that in order to know how this *karaamat* happened, it is necessary to understand dreams and to get up suddenly from sleep for brief moments. We spend our lives in the two states of dreaming and waking, which are different in nature. After pointing this out, he related the following verse of the Holy Quran to his devotees, referring to God [3:27]:

> *You cause the night (dream state) to enter into the day (waking state), and the day into the night, and take out the living from the dead, and the dead from the living…*



Qalandar Baba Awliya

Qalandar Baba Awliya explained further that the sense of time and space are nullified while dreaming but come into effect while waking. In the dream state, we can visit many places and go on a journey of many weeks and months, so time and space are void, and when we awaken, we come back under the constraining effects of time and space. We may be active in both, but the nature of the senses is different. He added that we must learn to use the senses of the dream state to become free from the restrictions of time and space so that we can then engage in whatever we wish, as we do when awake. This is why it is said, "When prophets sleep, their hearts are awake".

Baba Tajuddin assisted the man in performing hajj because it was his great desire, and when he insisted, Baba Tajuddin spiritually empowered him by changing his condition from being awake but not dreaming to dreaming whilst being awake. In this way, the old man was liberated from the constraints of time and space, allowing him to perform all the rituals of the hajj pilgrimage in Makkah, over two and a half thousand miles away, without involving his physical body.

Ajmer Shareef in a Touch

Baba Tajuddin took hold of his hand, whereupon he found himself in... Ajmer Shareef under the blessing of the saint's touch.

Baba Tajuddin often visited Ajmer Shareef, the city of Hazrat Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti, the Sultan of Hind. He did so on many occasions without others knowing about it. One day, however, his visit was revealed. He was with Khwaja Sahib when a man was informed of the reinstatement of his government service. The man later visited Nagpur and recognised Baba Tajuddin [see Reinstated by Khwaja Sahib].

On another occasion, a man came to Baba Tajuddin and expressed his wish to visit Ajmer Shareef. Babaji told him, "Ajmer is right here. Where exactly do you want to go?" While saying this, Baba Tajuddin took hold of his hand, whereupon he found himself in a totally changed environment. He was roaming the streets of Ajmer Shareef under the blessing of the saint's touch. After completing his visit, Babaji removed his hand from that person's hand, and he found himself back in Nagpur.

An explanation

Many years later, in Karachi, Qalandar Baba Awliya explained how this *karaamat* happened to his devotees. He told them that humans have two aspects, one external and one internal. The internal is original, unrestrained by time and space, and is able to witness realities, whereas the external is like a shadow; it is restrained by time and space, and it only perceives physically. He explained that what Baba Tajuddin did was that he created the right angle for witnessing Ajmer with *basar* (inner sight), and it is this that enabled the man to visit Ajmer as if he were physically present.

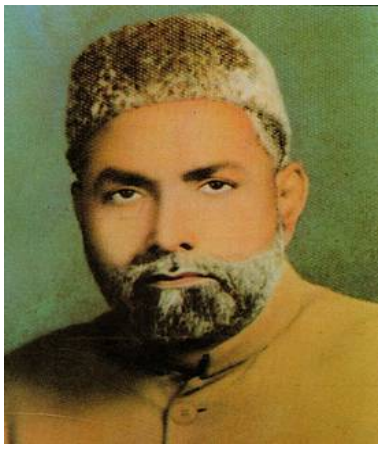
Explaining Bilocation

The secret is in mastery of the air element because air is pervasive.... Spiritually evolved people with spiritual powers can simultaneously project their souls onto multiple places.

Baba Tajuddin's ability to bilocate was evident from an early age when he returned home with his grandmother, who took him to school and was told he was never absent [see No Absences to Explain]. He bilocated when a commanding officer saw him in a bazaar while locked in a cell [see Both Inside and Outside] when seen meditating while also on duty in the army [On Duty while Meditating], and when Usman and Abdul Ghaffar saw him outside while he was inside during a *naat* gathering [see The Nature of the Ascension]. He also made others achieve the same [see No Food but Tea and Vigils, The Nature of the Ascension].

When asked to explain how he was able to be at the masjid while also on duty, Tajuddin replied that he was mentally engaged in both preoccupations. However, he also complained of his difficulty in managing both together, which is why he wanted to leave the army. This way, he could concentrate exclusively on remembering God and helping people. The secret is in mastery of the air element because air is pervasive. That's why when Dr. Abdul Majeed was confounded as to how Tajuddin was both outside and locked inside a cell, Tajuddin mentioned that the same air circulates in both places [see Both Inside and Outside].

Many years later, Qalandar Baba Awliya further explained the bilocation phenomenon with the analogy of a photo negative, from which many copies can be obtained as required. The soul is like the negative, and the body is the positive copy. A pure and powerful enough mental lens can send out multiple positive copies of itself. He also gave an analogy of a television set receiving pictures from a central broadcasting station. The same picture is sent out to several places at once. Similarly, spiritually evolved people with spiritual powers can simultaneously project their souls onto multiple places.



Qalandar Baba Awliya

In Charge of Hindustan

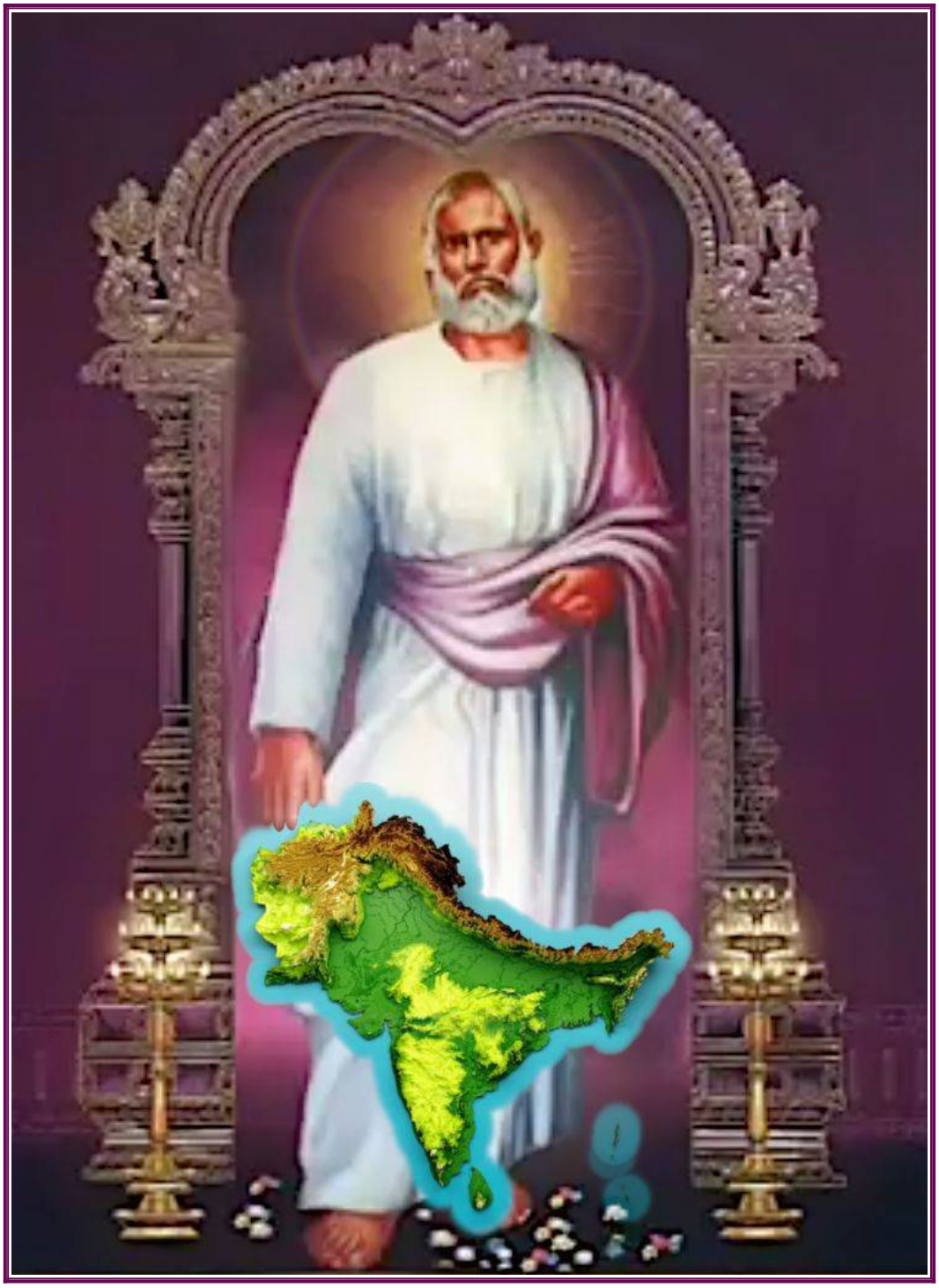
> Both spiritual and mundane matters in Hindustan were then in the hands of Baba Tajuddin... [It was he] who was actually in charge... Baba Tajuddin was also very much concerned about the social, economic, and political issues prevailing in his time.

Once, a man was beleaguered by a court of law for a very large amount of compensation in spite of being blameless. His appeal was pending in a higher court, but it seemed unlikely the decree would be overturned. To increase his chances of a favourable verdict, the man wrote to his guru in Allahabad and requested his aid. The reply affirmed Baba Tajuddin's greatness.

In his guru's reply, it was made clear that both spiritual and mundane matters in Hindustan were then in the hands of Baba Tajuddin. Accordingly, he was advised to lodge his appeal with the saint in Nagpur. The man, therefore, went straight to Baba Tajuddin and succeeded in getting what he wanted. With the blessing of the saint who was actually in charge of Hindustan, the magnanimous Baba Tajuddin of Nagpur, the verdict in the higher court was made in his favour. The previous decree was overturned, and the man was no longer harassed to give any undue compensation.

Another case of injustice concerned a different man accused of the murder of a rich barber. He was found guilty and sentenced to death. His parents begged Baba Tajuddin to intervene. Initially, Baba Tajuddin would get upset and not listen to them for some reason better known to himself, perhaps due to its complexity, but eventually, he assured them their son would be released. Sure enough, a higher court of appeal declared him not guilty, and he was soon discharged.

In dealing with mundane or worldly matters, besides handling certain legal cases to ensure justice, Baba Tajuddin was also very much concerned about the social, economic, and political issues prevailing in his time. At the height of Baba Tajuddin's popularity following the end of the First World War, several famous leaders paid visits to his Holiness. Among them were the Ali Brothers [see An Appointment with Taj Baba] and Mahatma Gandhi [see Gandhiji's Crows].



In the Guise of a Barrister

His eloquent words made such an impact that the judge made his decision in their favour there and then... The barrister had come from nowhere to help them and just disappeared.

Once, Baba Tajuddin was sitting quietly under a mango tree in Waki Woods when he was met by a man named Fida. When he sat nearby after paying his respects, a planter named Ramu arrived. He, too, sat down with them after paying his respects. Fida was a witness to the event that was about to happen. The planter used to seek out Baba Tajuddin and often came to sit with the master. On this occasion, Babaji told the planter, "Go and do your work", but he preferred to stay. Babaji then said to him, "Fair enough. Now stay seated here under this tree, and don't move from here; otherwise, I'll kill you."

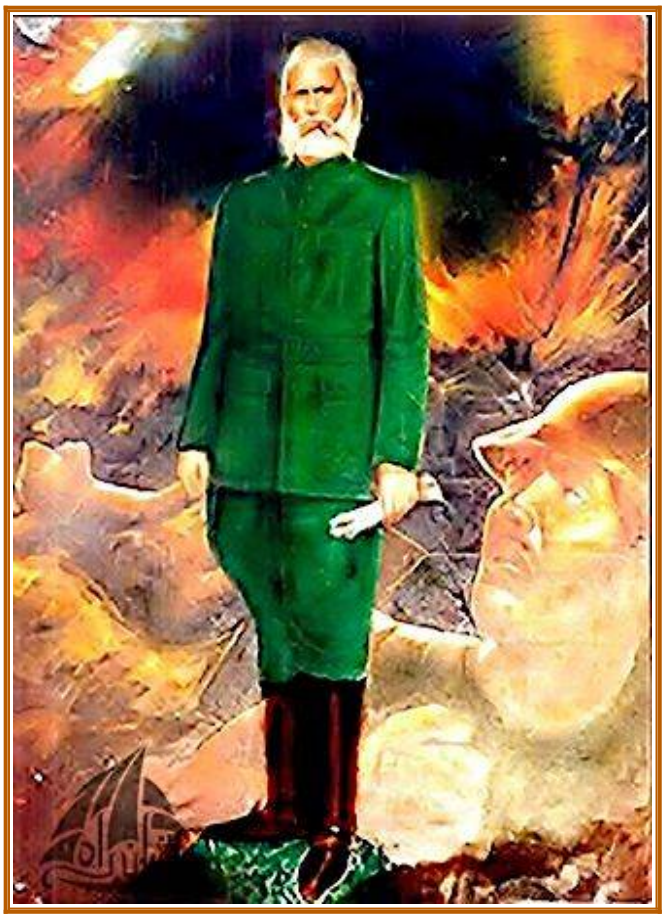
Baba Tajuddin went away, and the planter stayed in that place for three whole days, during which time Baba Tajuddin kept appearing to see him there. On the fourth day, the man still in his place was lying with a cloak over him when his brother Raman was passing by not far from the tree in search of him, shouting his name, "Ramu, Ramu". Hearing his name being called, Ramu awoke and stood up. He rushed over to his brother Raman and embraced him. Raman asked where he had been and told him that he had been searching for him all these days.

Raman then gave his brother Ramu the good news that a decision had been made in their case, in their favour, which had been pending in the courts for so long. They had regained the rights to their own lands. However, there was confusion as to how this situation came about because it seemed unlikely that they would win, especially given that they were too poor to hire a lawyer and the opposer, in their case, was an affluent dignitary. It was evident that the landowners were helpless in this matter, so the news was a huge surprise.

It emerged from what Raman told Ramu that a well-dressed barrister came to their house while he was absent. To their surprise, the barrister asked if they had a legal case to handle. Raman replied in the affirmative, as the man looked genuine and eager to help. When the stranger surprisingly added that he would not charge them any fee, Raman

handed over all the documents they had related to their case. The barrister told them to appear at the court at eight o'clock in the morning two days later and promptly disappeared.

When Raman arrived outside the court at the appointed time, the barrister was present to fight for his case. Along with the District Commissioner, they all proceeded inside. During the proceedings, the barrister argued for their case, talking continuously for half an hour. His eloquent words made such an impact that the judge made his decision in their favour there and then, and the claim of the complainant was dismissed. The paperwork was finalised the very next day, and it was at that point that Raman set out in search of his brother.



Raman added that they also tried to meet the barrister again to thank him, but there was no sign of him anywhere. They asked other lawyers in the area, all of whom knew each other, but no one had ever heard of him. The barrister had come from nowhere to help them and just disappeared. Meanwhile, Baba Tajuddin was listening to their conversation while wearing a mantle nearby. When he approached the two brothers and took it off, Raman recognised him as the barrister who helped them. Baba Tajuddin then said, "I haven't disappeared. I'm still around."

The Chief Justice

He spoke directly to the lad, said it was from Baba Tajuddin of Sakardara, and presented it to him. He also gave him glad tidings.

To make future provisions for handling matters of justice fairly, Baba Tajuddin blessed a young lad in Nagpur by the name of Muhammad Irfan Hidayatullah (1905-1992). Irfan noted in his memoir, 'My Own Boswell', that as a child, he was playing one afternoon with a friend in his courtyard when a joyful crowd of people gradually steered toward his house. He thought perhaps it would pass by, but to their surprise, it came right into their courtyard.

Irfan ran straight to his mother. They soon realised that the crowd was that of a saint residing in Sakardara. When the devotees lined up against a wall, they began talking with his father, Hidayatullah, and called for his youngest son, Irfan. At this point, the household was wondering why the saint's devotees had come inside and what they wanted with Irfan.

One *mureed* stepped forward and took out a half-burnt piece of paper from his pocket. He spoke directly to the lad, said it was from Baba Tajuddin of Sakardara, and presented it to him. He also gave him glad tidings on behalf of his master that what he was given would be instrumental for him and that he would ride an elephant by means of it.

Having delivered the paper and news, all the devotees departed from the house and returned to Sakardara. Irfan's mother kept the piece of paper given to her son in a safe place. It was by virtue of this paper that Irfan managed to be successful in his education, gain the positions that he did, and have strokes of luck along the way in serving the cause of justice.

Irfan later served as a lecturer in law, an advocate general, and then a judge and chief justice in Nagpur's high court (1946-1956). He progressed further still and ultimately became a judge of India's Supreme Court (1958-1970), serving the last two years as the 11th Chief Justice and India's 6th Vice-President (1979-1984). The paper indeed proved to be instrumental in his life.

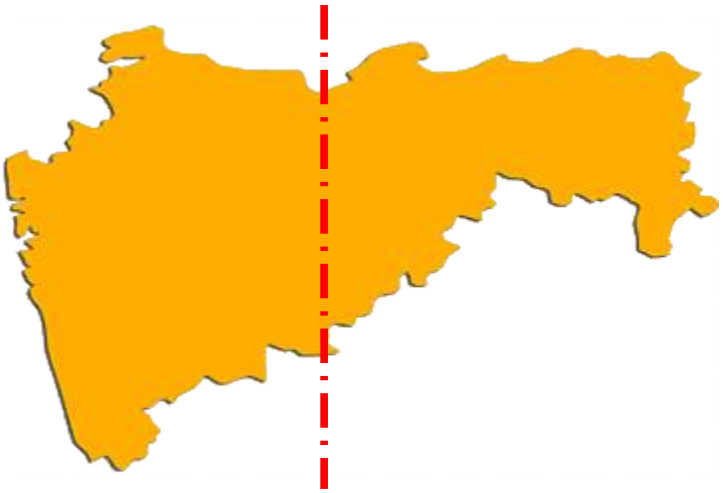
The Half Minister

Yusuf Hussayn was blessed with the news of being appointed as chief minister for one of the two districts.

Once, a man named Yousuf Hussayn Khan presented himself in Baba Tajuddin's service and was told, "Go now! I have arranged for you to be appointed as half a minister (*diwaan*)!"

It was not the least bit clear what Baba Sahib meant by 'half a minister'. In those days, there was only one post of chief minister in every native state of India. However, some time later, it so happened that the state in which he resided was split into two separate administrative districts. Instead of one minister, two were now required for its newly formed eastern and western districts.

Not long after this administrative change, Yousuf Hussayn was blessed with the news of being appointed as chief minister for one of the two districts. Baba Tajuddin's words were now clearly understood because Yousuf was a minister for only half of the original state when appointed as 'half a minister'. It was also clear that Baba Tajuddin knew beforehand that the state was going to be divided into two for administrative purposes before it became public knowledge and happened.



An Appointment with Taj Baba

When the time for the appointment came, Baba Tajuddin came out of his room and asked for tea and for it to be served to all those present... but the Ali brothers were unable to arrive on time.

In the days before Gandhiji's meeting with Baba Tajuddin, the Ali Brothers, Maulana Shaukat Ali and Maulana Mohamed Ali Jauhar, came to Nagpur to hold meetings to gather more public support for their growing *Khilafat* Movement. It was around one year after a massive gathering of Muslims in Lucknow to support the preservation of the *Khilafah* of the Usmanian (Ottoman) Empire. Before coming, the Ali Brothers wrote to Raja Raghuji Rao to make an appointment with Baba Tajuddin. This made Raja Sahib concerned because there were no special timings or

Ali Brothers of the Khilafat Movement

other restrictions for meeting the saint. People would simply show up to visit him without any need for an appointment. He explained this to them, but they insisted on making an appointment.

Anyhow, when Babaji heard about this request for an appointment, he said to Raja Sahib, "Okay, Raghoji, invite them over to join our tea party", and gave the time of four o'clock next Friday evening. He also instructed arranging umbrella picnic tables and biscuits. Raja Sahib duly informed the Ali Brothers of their appointment with the Taj Baba, who had no access to a watch or clock. When the appointment came, Baba Tajuddin came out of his room at the exact time he specified and asked for tea and biscuits to be served to all those present there. The tea party began as scheduled. The people had drunk their tea, and the party was over when Babaji announced it fifteen minutes later and returned to his room. The Ali brothers were unable to arrive on time for whatever reason. An hour later, Baba Tajuddin asked for the arrangements to be made for his conveyance and promptly departed for the city centre.

While the Ali brothers were heading toward the palace in their car to meet the Taj Baba, with whom they had arranged an appointment, they saw him in his *baggi*. They had no choice but to catch up with the saint on the streets. The car driver stopped following his master's instructions, so the Ali brothers came out of it to give *salaam* to the Taj Baba. Babaji asked the driver to give them garlands, but the driver gestured by folding his hands that he should give them the garlands himself, whereupon Babaji said, "Why should I give them? You give them." The driver, therefore, presented the Ali Brothers with the garlands. Then, Baba Tajuddin said to them, "You've got the garlands, now go and see the gates (*haar mil gaye, ab jao phaatak dekhte*)". The Ali Brothers could not understand the meaning of these words but then made an important request. They asked Babaji to pray for the English to leave. The master advised going atop a mountain and starting sweeping to make that possible and promptly departed after saying these words. Again, it was not something the Ali Brothers could understand.

That night, 800 members of the Khilaafat Movement defected to join Gandhi's Indian Congress, who were among the crows Baba Tajudidn told Gandhi would fly [see Gandhiji's Crows]. When Gandhiji was asked what this advice meant, he understood it right away. He explained that it was necessary for people of different faiths to come together like the apex

of a mountain, climbing it in exertion, as is necessary for a struggle, and to work in tandem like the bristles of a broom when sweeping.

The Ali Brothers left Nagpur following their historic defeat but had no idea which gates the Taj Baba had directed them to and why. It was only when they later went to Bombay that they understood it after being arrested and seeing the gates of the jail into which they were put in September 1921. The Ali Brothers' mother was a virtuous woman who highly respected Baba Tajuddin. She was dumbfounded as to why her sons met this fate after having returned from Nagpur. She asked them whether they had met the saint in Nagpur, and they affirmed that they did. This puzzled her further, so she made them relate the entire experience. Now, she clearly understood what had happened after hearing about the appointment and the missed tea party. Their mistake was making an appointment and failing to meet it once made. She explained to them that it was necessary to present oneself as a beggar when attending the court of a saint and that the 'gate' was the jail.

Soon after their confinement, the Ali Brothers' mother went to Nagpur to meet Baba Tajuddin herself. She begged for his forgiveness, claiming that her sons were naive. Babaji assured her he had forgiven them and gave her the glad tidings that the gate had been opened. As a result, the Ali Brothers won their appeal and were soon released from jail. Sometime later, the Ali Brothers paid another visit to Baba Tajuddin in Nagpur, this time without an appointment. They were instructed to go to London, as it was destined for them. Muhammad Ali passed away in London.

The Ali Brothers when jailed in 1921

The abolishment of the Usmanian Empire the following year, on 1 November 1922, which had lasted for over 600 years, put a complete end to the *Khilafat* Movement. It also ended its association with Gandhi's Congress Party and his non-cooperation movement. Many Muslims who were working for the *Khilafat* Movement now gave their support to the Muslim League instead, which later led to the creation of Pakistan.

Saying Allah Allah

He reasoned that since his intention was pure, Babaji would call him over himself... [He] advised him: “Sit in the house, remember ‘Allah, Allah’, and leave your job.”

A chief constable named Devaji Rao from Madras recalled his great desire to meet Baba Tajuddin. He heard that he often toured the streets and lanes of Nagpur on his horse-drawn carriage. This desire developed when he went to the house of Inspector Abdul Kareem and saw two pictures hanging on the wall, one of which he recognised as being of Baba Tajuddin of Nagpur. He asked Abdul Kareem to give him the picture. He did not give it, but when he told his friend about the fifty rupee cost of a train ticket to Nagpur and Devaji said he couldn't afford it, he suggested that he be appointed in Nagpur.

It seemed unlikely that such a thing would happen since Devaji Rao’s posting in Madras was permanent, but Devaji remained hopeful that one day he would be able to meet the great saint in person. He reasoned that since his intention was pure, Babaji would call him over himself. It so happened that a few days later, the Congress party planned to hold a session of its annual meeting in Nagpur, and Abdul Kareem was given an order to take Devaji Rao to this session. Abdul Kareem secretly reported about Devaji being unfit for duty on a long journey due to his heart disease, but the police commissioner admonished him for reporting his condition and gave him strict orders to comply and take the chief constable to Nagpur under all circumstances.

While performing his duty during the meeting session of the Congress party in Nagpur, Devaji’s heart condition worsened, and he asked Abdul Kareem to take him back to Madras. Abdul Kareem agreed to return him the next day, but when the next day came, Devaji thought it would be unfortunate to miss the opportunity to meet Baba Tajuddin. After all, his appointment in Nagpur fulfilled his wish to meet Babaji in person. The thought of going back without meeting him was unbearable.

Since the train back to Madras was to depart at noon, and Devaji remembered being told that Baba Tajuddin tours Nagpur’s lanes in his horse-drawn carriage, he thought he would find him on his *baggi*

somewhere in the morning before boarding the train. Suddenly, he saw a *baggi* approaching, and a large number of people running behind it. Baba Tajuddin was in a joyful state. Devaji joined the people running behind the carriage to get a chance to kiss the saint's feet. However, when he reached close to the carriage, he suddenly had severe pain in his heart and was about to fall. Thereupon, Baba Tajuddin stopped the carriage, put his hand on the man's head, and told him not to run.

Devaji stopped running, and Baba Tajuddin's carriage moved ahead. When he returned to the house in which he was staying to wait for Abdul Kareem, too much time had passed. He missed the train. At three o'clock in the afternoon, he saw Baba Tajuddin's carriage again, this time with closed eyes. Then, Baba Tajuddin opened his eyes, and he heard him say, "Slowly, he will become well".

He then turned to the man and advised him: "Sit in the house, remember 'Allah, Allah', and leave your job." The man thought about how he would earn his livelihood if he left his job. Baba Tajuddin then continued, "O what stomach you have been given, which is a quarter treasure, so spend your life by saying Allah, Allah". Devaji just did as he was told.

Although the man did not understand the first part, he understood he was being advised to leave his job and spend time doing *zikr* instead. When the man went back to Madras, the doctors told him that his heart's condition was in danger and that he could hardly live for more than one month. So, Devaji decided to spend the last days of his life engaged in saying "Allah, Allah". He was granted a pension from his service for his needs, and he occupied himself by repeatedly saying "Allah, Allah". In doing so, he no longer had any pain in his heart or any other health complaint, and he lived for six more years.

Gandhiji's Crows

Although these crows were enamoured by Gandhiji under his political influence, Gandhiji himself had become enamoured by Baba Tajuddin under his spiritual influence.

In those days when Mahatma Gandhi was emerging as a political force in British India, by gathering support for his non-cooperation and self-rule (*swaraj*) movements after becoming their leader in 1920, a public meeting was arranged in Nagpur during 26-31 December that same year. It was during this meeting, known as the 35th 'Nagpur Session', that his Congress Party, the Indian National Congress, was recognised as a strong political force in the country. A galaxy of other eminent leaders were present as well. Gandhi gained this position due to the extent of support he received throughout the country, especially from the Muslim community and in Nagpur in particular.

Gandhi in 1920 before visiting Nagpur

Little did Gandhiji know before coming, however, that this was the city where Baba Tajuddin lived, a saint who was already established as a spiritual power and saviour of the masses. While Gandhi was walking along the streets of Nagpur with his party members, he heard a sudden, loud cry that some Baba was approaching. The crowd was instantly growing larger, and Gandhi was just as eager as others to meet Baba Tajuddin after he heard more about him. When the saint arrived

and paused on the main road in his *baggi*, the people started flocking around him.

Gandhi also went over to the *baggi*, and it was then that the two powers met face-to-face. Gandhiji, the new political force in India, gave *salaam* to Baba Tajuddin, and in response, the spiritual powerhouse told him that he had flown 800 crows. Gandhi could not understand the meaning of these words at the time. Nonetheless, he thanked Babaji. Gandhi went off to continue what he was doing, although it was only after the saint left that he was able to get some attention from the people.

Gandhi at the Nagpur Congress in December 1920

Later that evening, when the meeting of the Indian National Congress was being held in Craddock Town, a large number of people from various other parties left to join the Congress. When the numbers were counted, it was found that the new members in Nagpur amounted to 800. These were the crows Baba Tajuddin was referring to, who were mostly defectors from the Khilaafat Movement [see An Appointment with Taj Baba]. Although the crows were enamoured by Gandhiji under his political influence, Gandhi himself had become enamoured by Baba Tajuddin under his spiritual influence. Gandhi was very impressed that Baba Tajuddin knew exactly how many people would join his party in Nagpur, so he was eager to meet the wondrous Baba again in person.

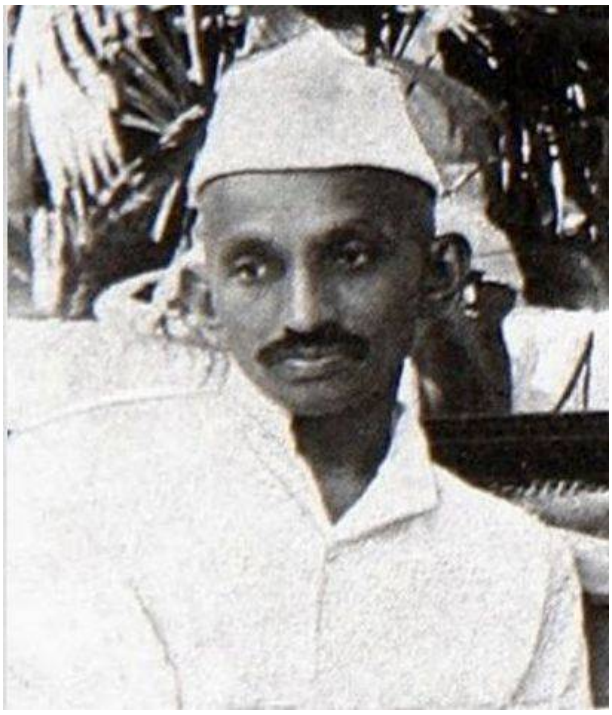
Gandhi extended his stay in Nagpur and went to meet Baba Tajuddin every day. The saint often scolded him, but Gandhi kept coming for as long as he was in Nagpur. He learnt much from him, and he became

emboldened by the visits. In fact, by the end of the Nagpur Session, Gandhiji had consolidated himself as his party's supreme leader, and a new chapter in the struggle for independence began with the non-cooperation movement. Various important matters were discussed and agreed upon in Nagpur that shaped the national struggle. In the words of the Congress historian, Dr. Pattabhi Sitaramayya:

> *The Nagpur Congress really marked a new era in recent Indian history. The old feelings of impotent rage and importunate requests gave place to a new sense of responsibility and a spirit of self-reliance. The Nagpur Congress laid a heavy duty upon the Nation, and the All India Congress Committee... set itself seriously to its task.*

On Mahatma Gandhi himself, the historian added:

> *The session was a personal triumph for Gandhi. It left every one of the older Congressmen... aghast, asking themselves and each other, "Who is this man that speaketh with a tone of authority and whence doth he come?"*



Gandhi in 1920

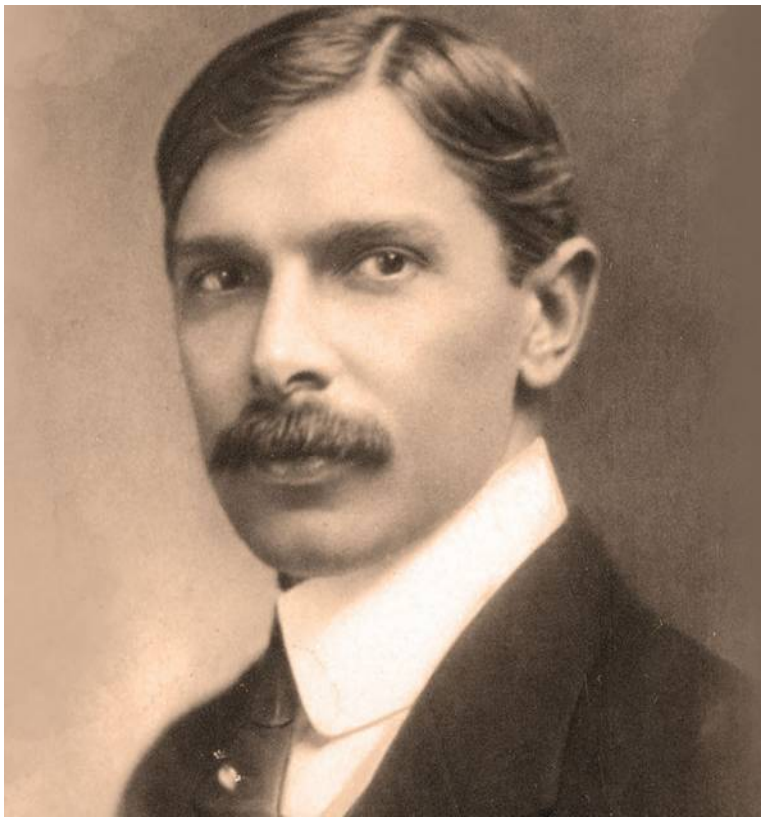
An achievement of such epic proportions can only come about when there is some higher level of support behind it. As expected, a few major changes came about during Gandhi's visit to Nagpur through the passing of momentous resolutions. They were made in the presence of around 22,000 participants, of whom over 14,500 were delegates, the highest number ever achieved before. The large number of Muslims who attended the Nagpur Session to support Gandhiji were mobilised by the Ali Brothers of the *Khilafat* Movement. The resolutions included greater support for Hindu-Muslim unity and a firmer attempt to remove the curse of untouchability in Hinduism. To achieve

these, they adopted a stricter policy of non-violent action called '*satyagraha*', in which there is a refusal to do harm and a practise of disassociating from government institutions, boycotting, and nationwide *hartaal* (strikes). The movement also called for the restoration of the *Khilafat* in Turkey, free elementary education, and universal suffrage.

Although Baba Tajuddin welcomed all these initiatives, another important and historical grand operation was being engineered simultaneously behind the scenes. Muhammad Ali Jinnah was also present at the start of the Nagpur Session, in which he famously refused to title Gandhi as Mahatma. He walked out and left the Congress Party over the issue of *satyagraha* and civil disobedience, which he thought would cause anarchy and due to inadequate provisions for Muslims. He preferred working within the constitution to bring about steadier reforms and using ethical power through persuasion and moral character instead. His words were:

> *I will have nothing to do with this pseudo-religious approach to politics. I part company with the Congress and Gandhi. I do not believe in working up mob hysteria.*

This division enabled Mr Jinnah to demand and eventually gain a separate homeland for Muslims in 1947, which made him '*Qaid-e-Azam*' (Great Leader) of Pakistan. The time then came for Gandhi to move on to other parts of the country for the sake of his political mission in India. Meanwhile, Baba Tajuddin continued with his spiritual mission for all of humanity while remaining based in Nagpur.

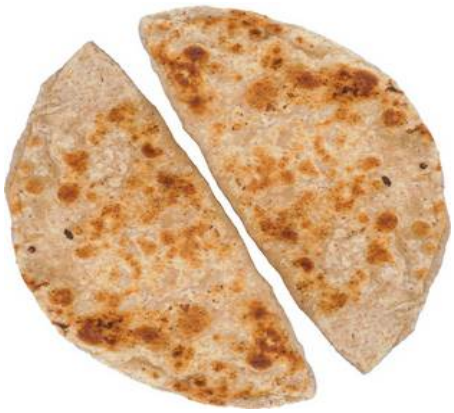


Muhammad Ali Jinnah (Qaid-e-Azam) ca 1920

The Two are One

He hesitated no more and immediately paid homage to Baba Tajuddin... For him, the two were indeed one.

A *mureed* in the silsila of the saint Hazrat Shah Niyaz Beniyaz (1742-1834) came to Nagpur from Uttar Pradesh in 1920. He came to attend the Congress Party conference, which was already in progress when he arrived. He was more devoted, however, to his spiritual master. His devotion was to such an extent that he considered no one else equal to him.



In those days, Baba Tajuddin was going about in his *baggi*, followed by a crowd of devotees as usual. On seeing this stranger in the crowd, Baba Tajuddin broke a piece of bread and offered one half to him. The man hesitated to take the half-piece of bread. He reflected for a short moment and thought to himself, "If I take something from a saint, then it must be from my own spiritual master. It would not be right to take it from another."

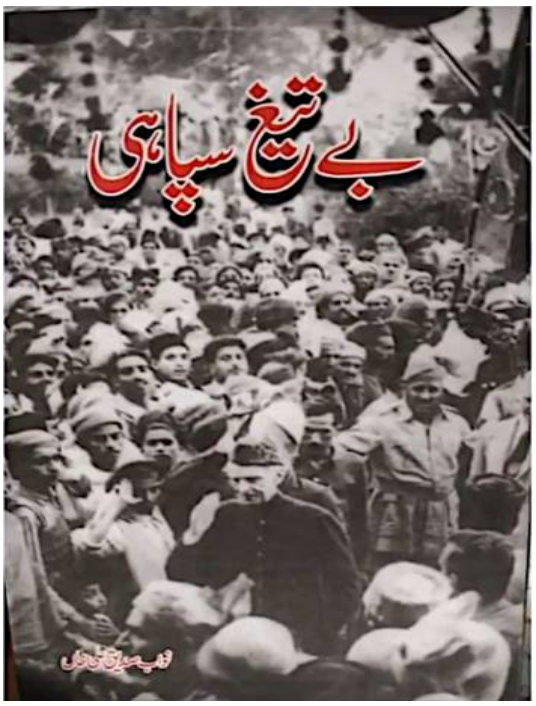
Baba Tajuddin then said to him, "Don't you comprehend how it is that the two are one?" Hearing these words of Baba Tajuddin, the man's doubts vanished. He hesitated no more and immediately paid homage to Baba Tajuddin, just as he would have done if his own spiritual master were present before him.

The lesson Baba Tajuddin felt the need to give to that *mureed* was that all realised saints constitute a unity in knowledge of the divine since they all share and embody the same. The man remained a disciple of Shah Niyaz Beniyaz, but he no longer held the belief that there was a distinction between saints. For him, the two were indeed one with respect to their achievements of self-realisation, gnosis of God, and spiritual knowledge.

The Swordless Soldier

Siddiq Ali used to accompany his father, who often went to meet Baba Tajuddin... [who] once briefly wore his shoes.

A book written by Nawab Siddiq Ali Khan (1900-1974), an active member of the Pakistan movement, titled 'The Swordless Soldier' (*Be Tegh Sipahi*), mentions some episodic details about Baba Tajuddin. Siddiq Ali was born and raised in Nagpur, so he knew Baba Tajuddin well. When he was young, he used to accompany his father, who often went to meet Baba Tajuddin, and the saint once briefly wore his shoes.



Be Tegh Sipahi by Siddiq Ali Khan (book cover)

A fudge and pebbles

One day, Siddiq Ali's father made *piyosi*, an egg custard fudge, to offer it to Tajuddin while the saint was a resident in the lunatic asylum. When he came to present it, along with his son Siddiq, Tajuddin was sitting on a heap of pebbles. Some other needy people were sitting with him. He took it gladly, and they began to eat it. However, a thought occurred to him that made him proud of being able to make such a sweet dish. Suddenly, the saint stopped eating it, picked up a few pebbles, and began eating those instead. He chewed on the pebbles as if they were more delicious than the fudge. Realising his mistake and what the saint was indicating, he duly apologised, whereupon Tajuddin returned to eating what had been brought for him.

The blessed shoes

Siddiq Ali recalled his father's visits to meet Baba Tajuddin in his book. He noted that Baba Sahib wore long *jubbas* but no cap or footwear of any

kind. Once, he was wearing embroidered shoes and was walking behind Baba Tajuddin. Suddenly, Babaji stopped, asked for his shoes to be given over immediately, and wore them for a brief period before returning them and continuing to walk barefoot again. Those blessed shoes served Siddiq Ali well for a long time, especially during his political career.

Condolences to Siddiq's sister

Once, Nawab Siddiq's sister, who was very much respected within and outside the family, was very ill. Seeing her condition made the family wail because her health started deteriorating rapidly one day. It looked as if she was going to pass away very soon. It so happened the following late afternoon that Baba Tajuddin was passing by on his *baggi* along Nawab Lane, where they lived. They immediately rushed out and requested him to pray for the lady while she was weeping profusely. Thereupon, Babaji stopped the carriage and said something that could not be understood except for news of her death and words of condolence.

No more short tempers

A friend of Siddiq Ali, named Azizuddin Arif Meer, was around the same age but taller. He treated him as a brother because his father regarded his friend's mother as his sister. Azizuddin's father, Syed Ahmad Hussain Patel, was closely devoted to Baba Tajuddin. He had left the world to permanently join the court of his spiritual master. Azizuddin himself was into hunting animals around Nagpur and in his village, where he received land revenue. He was especially fond of hunting deer. However, he suffered from a short temper. He often lost control of his mind and would beat people in a state of madness. For this reason, most people tried to avoid him out of fear. This worried Siddiq very much.

In the hope of rectifying his son, Ahmad Hussain chained his feet and took him to Baba Sahib's court. He assured Siddiq that nothing would be done against Azizuddin's will. Siddiq reached Sakardara to see what was going to happen. He trusted Baba Tajuddin to be successful in positively transforming his friend. A normal hustle and bustle was present when he reached there. Many devotees and other admirers were sitting in the shape of an open circle with their master at one point in a state of absorption, saying something aloud. Siddiq spotted his friend sitting with his father a short distance away in chains, outside the inner circle. Azizuddin was crying while his father sat quietly with folded hands. Siddiq went closer to them and noticed that Baba Sahib was replying to

what he was thinking about his friend's condition. Babaji said out loud, "Take out some blood from his forehead by cutting a vein. Then he will become well."

Azizuddin's father gave approval, so Siddiq unchained his friend and took him away by horsecart. The Bhonsle family's surgeon, Syed Ahmad of Nalapar, came that evening to operate on Azizuddin. By God's grace, after extracting some blood from the exact spot specified by Baba Tajuddin, his friend never troubled anyone ever again.

The mathematics exam

Siddiq Ali was weak in mathematics. He was unable to pass the matriculation examination of the Board of Central Provinces and Barar, which was affiliated with Allahabad University. His greatly disappointed father had many plans for his future education and career. Consequently, he arranged for his son to retake the mathematics exam through a board affiliated with Calcutta University. Siddiq was nervous after retaking the exam, so he asked four of his friends to inform him of the result after returning to Nagpur. He was very worried about failing again, as he knew it would upset his father. The anxiety was exacerbated by the delay in the announcement of the results.

While in this state of anxiety, Siddiq went to meet Azizuddin's father with a despondent heart. He requested that he pray in the court of Baba Tajuddin. He knew that usually, no one ever returned without getting their wish fulfilled, but he was unsure if he had done well enough in the mathematics exam to pass it. Siddiq went along with his uncle and sat quietly in Baba Sahib's court, but with a mind brimming with anxiety. He felt that a *karaamat* was now necessary if there was any chance of his passing. Babaji was uttering some unclear sentences at the time.

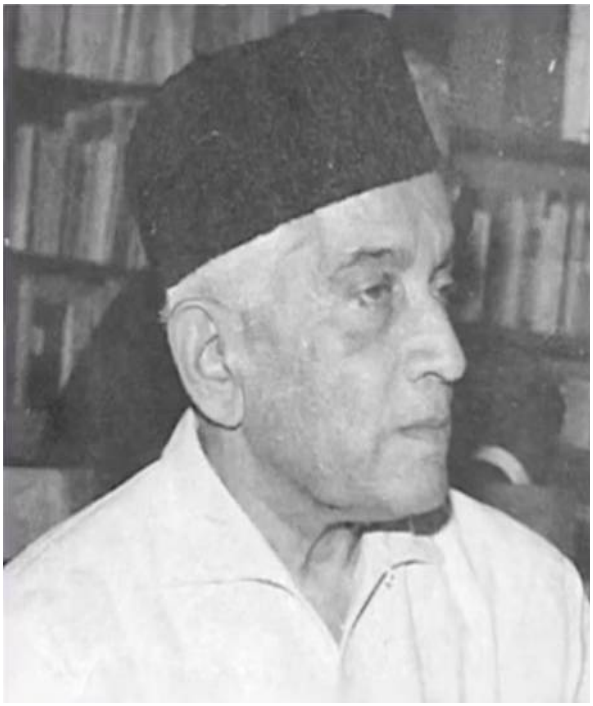
Shortly thereafter, he saw Esa Khan, who was massaging the master's feet while he was reclining on rough earth. Suddenly, Babaji sat up and took out four letters from Esa's upper pocket. He threw them up in the air and said loudly, while looking in Siddiq's direction, "You may go now! The result has been declared, and you have passed in the first division."

Siddiq returned home quickly on his bicycle in a happy mood. It quickly turned to joy when he was called over by the postman, who said, "Gentleman, stop there and take your letters." He took them eagerly and went inside. The result was exactly as Baba Tajuddin had described.

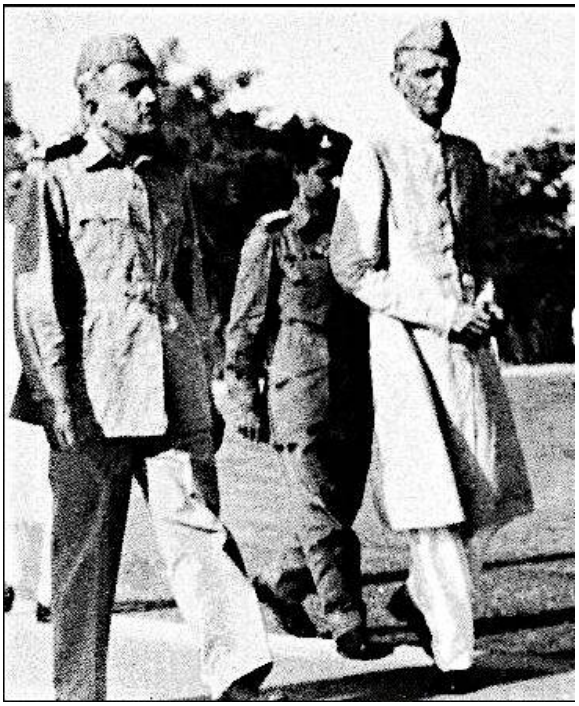
Political Career

The shoes that Baba Tajuddin blessed by wearing briefly served Siddiq Ali Sahib well for a long time, especially during his political career that began after his father died. In 1930, he served in Nagpur's Municipal Committee as a member of various boards, became active in the Muslim League five years later, and quickly became a close associate of Muhammad Ali Jinnah and Liaqat Ali Khan. He supervised the Muslim National Guard after an assassination attempt on Mr Jinnah and represented Hindustan at the historic Australian parliamentary assembly in 1936.

In recognition of his struggle for the cause of Pakistan, he was elected to the central committee of the Muslim League in 1940. He served as the political secretary of several other key political figures, including Prime Minister Liaqat Ali Khan, and was a key witness to the premier's assassination. The blessings continued up until he completed his job for Pakistan's Foreign Service Mission work in Africa in 1961.



Nawab Siddiq Ali Khan



Walking with Qaid-e-Azam

Communal Strife

[When] Nagpur was in the grip of severe communal violence... Baba Tajuddin did what he could to pour water on all those who tried to fan the flames of... hatred in his presence.

During the early 1920s, Nagpur was in the grip of severe communal violence between Hindus and Muslims. The situation was not isolated to Nagpur. It was afflicting the rest of Hindustan as well. In Nagpur, it worsened on 13 April 1923 when members of a Hindu *mahasabha* took out a procession on the occasion of Lakshmi Puja. Carrying the *swaraj* flag, they beat their drums and sang *bhajans* with music loudly and provocatively while passing by a mosque, which upset the local Muslim youth.

A succession of riots then followed in the Mahal and other areas of Nagpur. Intolerance, bloodshed, and killing were everywhere. Many people from both communities were being sent to jail for creating law and order problems. An issue also arose in those days about the permissibility of playing musical instruments in mosques, but the burning issue was the communal strife. Seeing that Hindus were killing many Muslims, one Muslim complained to Baba Tajuddin and requested that he do something about the situation. He simply said, “Please save them”. Baba Tajuddin knew very well what was happening. He was already very upset. The request only made him more furious, so he said, “Go away. No one can kill a true Muslim.” He meant that people with complete faith are protected by God, so no mortal can kill them unless God wills it. Only the faithless are killed by someone.

Baba Tajuddin did what he could to pour water on all those who tried to fan the flames of communal passion and hatred in his presence. At the height of the strife, however, Baba Tajuddin had to leave Sakardara for a period. The decision was taken to avert clashes between Hindus and Muslims since large numbers from both faiths would gather outside the palace. He and his close *mureeds* sought refuge and solace in the more peaceful surroundings of Waki. They spent much of the difficult time doing *zikr* and *muraqba* to help calm the population and put an end to the critical situation.

The Red Turban to End Conflict

"Baba Sahib, the problem of Hindu-Muslim communal violence has been settled thanks to your prayers"... "Oh, that's good!"

A certain Doctor Syed Mahmood (1879-1971) entered politics during his student days at Aligarh and soon became a prominent senior Muslim leader of the Indian National Congress. He became a confidant of Jawaharlal Nehru after the two met at Cambridge University in England. He was appointed many times as a minister in provincial and central governments. He also worked as an Indian ambassador in Egypt. His life mission was promoting communal harmony and making Muslims join the anti-colonial struggle led by his party. He took serious note of the worsening communal strife situation in Nagpur. It worried him deeply. Gandhiji instructed the doctor to go there and settle this issue after Shaukat Ali had failed to do the same.

Dr Syed Mahmood

The doctor was initially reluctant to go, but after Hakim Ajmal Khan insisted, he eventually agreed to go to deal with this matter. Ajmal convinced him by telling him about Baba Tajuddin, who was known to be very pious, and by advising him to meet the saint and ask for his assistance in resolving the issues there amicably. He therefore arranged to meet Babaji in Nagpur, which he later recounted. It was during those days when

the *Khilafat* movement was gaining strength in India, after he returned from gaining a PhD in Germany and began practising as a doctor in Patna while living in Bihar.

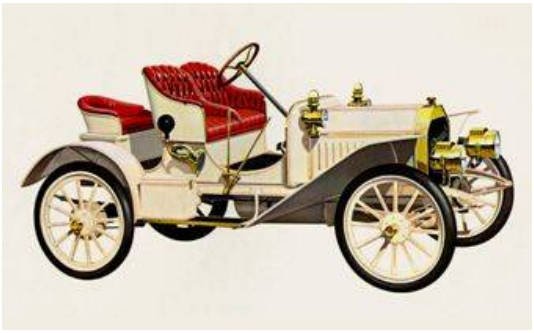
When Doctor Mahmood reached Nagpur, he went straight over to meet Baba Tajuddin in Raja Raghuji's palace in Sakardara. He knew the Maharaja was a firm devotee of Baba Tajuddin. He was disappointed, however, when he came to know that Babaji was not coming out of his residence. Then, there was hope that he would get a chance to meet Babaji after all. While he was waiting outside the main door, a dark-skinned man with redness in his eyes suddenly came out into the verandah, turned around, and went back inside after yelling that Baba Tajuddin was about to come out.

However, when Baba Tajuddin came out, he rushed to his carriage and tried to set off from the grounds of the palace. When the people saw him leaving, they quickly gathered around his carriage. His devotees threw flower petals at him, but the doctor remained standing in his place. A few people managed to convey their needs and wishes, but Baba Tajuddin's words were unclear at the time. When the carriage sped off, people rushed behind it. The doctor decided not to go after the carriage like them, but he did manage to throw a few petals in the saint's direction.

The doctor was told that some people would run behind the carriage for up to two miles on an almost daily basis. Therefore, he got into his car and sped off to reach Baba Tajuddin's *baggi*. By then there were only a few people around it and no crowd, unlike at the palace. While his car was moving alongside the *baggi*, Babaji asked what he wanted and added, "Do you want to go to Makkah and Madinah?"

Taking advantage of this opportunity, the doctor remarked to Baba Sahib, "The slavery of our people to the English is unbearable". He then asked when the English would leave Hindustan. Babaji replied clearly, in a passionless tone, "Yes, they will leave soon". Two servants of the Maharaja sitting alongside Babaji inside the carriage with folded hands looked surprised because it was unusual for him to converse casually like

that on such a serious matter. They thought the man in the car must be pious to deserve attention like this.



The doctor continued by asking about the communal violence. He said, “Sadly, there is also the problem of communal violence between Hindus and Muslims in Nagpur. I see that there are also Hindus in your service, so why are they fighting against Muslims? Please pray for this problem to be resolved and for harmony to be restored.”

While he was saying this, a couple of well-dressed Muslims were walking by, so the doctor addressed them and said, “Did you hear what Baba Sahib just said? He is saying that the disharmony and violence between Hindus and Muslims will be settled.”

Babaji then asked what more the doctor wanted, at which point Doctor Mahmood asked for Babaji to pray for him. Babaji took off the small, red Marathi-style turban he was wearing, gave it to him, and said, “Here, take this from me. I have settled the problem of Hindu-Muslim conflict.”

Doctor Mahmood took the gift gladly, thanked Baba Tajuddin, and left. When he did not get the opportunity to meet Babaji again for some days, the Maharaja sent him a message along with flowers and *mithai* as gifts. The message read: “You seem to be a pious man. I came to know about your recent conversation with Baba Tajuddin because it is unusual for him to converse with someone in such clear language. I would like to invite you to come and visit Babaji again.”

On his second visit to meet Baba Tajuddin, Doctor Mahmood saw him lying down on a mat when he arrived while one servant was massaging

his feet. The doctor informed him: “Baba Sahib, the problem of Hindu-Muslim communal violence has been settled thanks to your prayers.”

Baba Tajuddin replied: “Oh, that’s good!”

The doctor continued, “Baba Sahib! When will the English people leave from Hindustan? Their presence is unbearable.”

At hearing this, Baba Tajuddin was visibly upset. He then replied, “When you people become capable enough, then they will leave from here”.

During the subsequent general conversation, Baba Tajuddin repeatedly told the doctor to go back to his home. He kept saying it adamantly, “Now, go home!”

The doctor wanted to stay and continue talking for longer, but being afraid of what the reason might be for needing to go back to his own home, he promptly departed from the palace. Two companions who were with the doctor at the time tried to explain the situation. One of them said, “See, I told you not to go to see the Baba, but you did not take heed and listen to me. He’s a lunatic, but people have made him a *faqeer*. He was so bad to you that he did not let you sit there for long, and he kept telling you to leave so rudely.”

The other person told the doctor he perhaps meant for Muslims to go to Makkah and Madinah, as he hinted last time, and then come back to Hindustan as conquerors. Doctor Mahmood just laughed at their ideas. He dismissed both views. He knew there must be some serious personal reason for needing to go back.

The next day, Doctor Mahmood departed for Allahabad. When he arrived there, he went to Anand Bhavan, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru’s residence, where he had stayed before. While he was there, he received an urgent telegram informing him that his uncle’s son-in-law had died in Jaunpur. He noted that the time was exactly when he was talking with Baba Tajuddin in Nagpur.

The Long-Awaiting Visitor

It had been waiting for far longer... it was a 4,500-year-old snake.

One day in 1923, a snake came out of a pond near the Lal Kothi palace. The people gathered outside, waiting to meet the saint, noticed it coming and that it was spurting. Everyone panicked, like on the day when a tiger was released inside the palace grounds [see A Hungry Tiger in the Palace]. Only this time, the crowd was so dispersed that hardly anyone was around except for a few close *mureeds*.

The snake entered the palace and went straight to where Baba Tajuddin was sitting. As it approached his feet, the *mureeds* nearby moved further away. Baba Tajuddin remained motionless, with a smile on his face. He saw the snake coming and kept smiling while the others observed what was happening from a safer distance.

When the snake reached very close, Baba Tajuddin moved his right foot closer. The snake gently placed its head on the saint's foot. He then placed his other left foot on the snake to cuddle it. The *mureeds* were surprised by this bond. The snake curled itself with its head resting on the soles of Baba Tajuddin's feet for around ten minutes as they watched in amazement.

One *mureed* then reminded Baba Tajuddin of the many people who had been waiting outside for a long time to meet him and requested that the snake be ordered to leave. Baba Tajuddin turned to him and told him it had been waiting for far longer and that it was a 4,500-year-old snake. This revelation surprised all the *mureeds* present. But by now, they had become more relaxed before their master and his long-awaiting visitor.

Anyhow, Baba Tajuddin told the snake that it was enough and time to move on so that others could come inside, as they, too, were waiting, albeit in fear. The snake promptly set off back into the pond. Only then were the present-day visitors able to get another chance to meet the saint. Since then, the long-awaiting visitor has never been seen again. However, the words "time to move on" were a veiled indication to listeners that it also applied to himself.

The Waning Moon

"The moon of Dhul-Hijjah will be seen, but after that, the moon will no longer be seen." These were all veiled announcements of the waning of Baba Tajuddin's own earthly life.

At midnight, Baba Tajuddin was sitting on the terrace of the Sakardara palace with his *mureed* Baba Yousuf Shah Taji. Looking up at the sky, Baba Tajuddin moved his hand and asked, "Where is my crown?" Yousuf Shah was traumatised after hearing these words because he understood that the time for his master to depart from this world was near. When Baba Tajuddin sensed his thoughts, he told him, "There is still some time!"

It was in the month of Dhul-Qadah, in the year 1925, that the time for leaving came closer. Baba Tajuddin went on a trip, as was his normal practice, this time to sit on a bridge in Dighori. As usual, he was accompanied by a group of followers who sat with him and others who came to have their problems resolved. Baba Tajuddin asked another of his *mureeds*, Shah Fariduddin Taji, also known as Karim Baba, whether he knew the '*Taj al-Arifeen*' (Crown of Gnostics); the '*Siraj as-Salikeen*' (Sun of Spiritual Seekers); the '*Taj al-Muluk*' (Crown of All Domains). Fariduddin replied, "Who else could it be except for you, of course?"

Baba Tajuddin responded, "O Babu!" After closing his eyes for a moment, he then asked whether the Eid moon had been sighted. The question was unusual because the lesser Eid-ul-Fitr (post-Ramadan festival) had passed recently, so Fariduddin asked whether he was referring to the greater Eid-ul-Adha (festival of sacrifice). Baba Tajuddin then stated emphatically, "O Babu! The moon of Dhul-Hijjah will be seen, but after that, the moon will no longer be seen."

These were all veiled announcements of the waning of Baba Tajuddin's own earthly life. Those who understood what he really meant were very saddened by what they heard. To others, the meaning became apparent as the saint's health declined. During that month, his condition worsened. For

this reason, he was no longer able to go outside as before. Aziz-ul-Haq, a sub-inspector in the Napur city palace, recalled that someone had remarked, “Baba has regained his health”. Upon hearing this, the master said, “Now, what good will I be when I’ve eaten so many pebbles?”

It was customary for Baba Tajuddin to go into the city area on the occasion of the two Eid festivals. But when the moon of the greater Eid was sighted that year, he was not as well-dressed as normal, in spite of people’s insistence that he should be. They tried in vain to convince him to wear a new *lungi* appropriate for the festival. He also did not go into the city’s inner areas to tour its lanes as he normally did. Baba Tajuddin did not feel well, and he continued to feel unwell after the festival was over. His health gradually deteriorated during the course of the whole month. From then on, he was seen outside less and less often.

Baba Tajuddin in his final years

A Hut in Tajbagh

> "SubhanAllah! This earth is very good!.. A hut here will suffice. I will remain in it." It was apparent that he was unwell.

One day, Baba Tajuddin appeared outside unexpectedly to ring a bell that was normally rung by Raghuji's guards. He said afterwards that this bell would also be rung in Tajbagh from then on. In those days, some Muslims were eager to have a new enclave constructed because they considered it more worthy for a Muslim saint to reside in a place owned by Muslims. The tension between the religious groups even compelled Baba Tajuddin to live in a tent at a crossroads for some time before the trip to Dighori. Being a holy man of God, it was in his nature to alleviate the suffering of the whole of humanity regardless of religion, caste, status, and so on, so it was not an issue for him that Hindus like Raghuji Rao and Kashinath Rao were prominent in looking after him.

However, the pressure to appease those Muslim elements led to agreeing to arrange for a Muslim-owned place of abode. Tajbagh, later called Tajabad, was chosen for this purpose. The Maharaja, Raghuji Rao, was naturally disappointed when this decision was made to move away from his palace in Sakardara, but Baba Tajuddin assured him: "Who can take me away from you? My couch will be here at your place for thousands of years." He frequently passed through it during his last four months.

Tajbagh was a deserted area used as a wasteland, located on Amrador Road. There were, however, a few huts, a thatched mosque, and a well [see The Milky Well]. Fariduddin named the area Tajbagh. When Baba Sahib left Sakardara for Tajbagh, he sat inside the mosque and requested some food. He could only eat a little. He got up, went toward Belpeth for a walk, and after sitting on the open ground there, he picked up a handful of earth, sniffed it, and said, "*SubhanAllah*! This earth is very good! Construct a bungalow for me here." After a pause, Baba Tajuddin reverted by saying, "No, no, silence! A hut here will suffice. I will remain in it." It was apparent that he was unwell. Babaji's devotees raised the required sum of twenty thousand rupees and purchased the land from a certain Niazuddin since their master expressed his interest. Later, Fariduddin built a structure there, after whom others followed suit, and Tajbagh, named in Baba Tajuddin's honour, thus became inhabited.

A Procession to Karbala Medan

All the necessary preparations were made. Baba Tajuddin headed off in a procession to Karbala Medan once more, as he normally did. This time, however, the journey was aborted...

In the month of Muharram, it was routine for Baba Tajuddin to don a *jubba* and head for a place designated as Karbala Medan, near Kamptee. He would depart from Sakardara with a large following and a splendid scale of pomp and magnificence, led by Raja Raghuji Rao on an elephant at the front. Behind the elephant would be an army of soldiers marching in procession, holding spears in their hands, and behind them would be Baba Tajuddin's grand shahi *baggi*, with two flag bearers walking alongside. Mohammad Hussain Baba, Khwaja Ali Ameeruddin, and Khader Mohiuddin accompanied him, and a huge crowd of devotees and others eager to be blessed on this occasion would be around the *baggi*.

The procession would go all the way to the ground at Karbala Medan and return from there to Sakardara.

On the 10th of Muharram in July 1925 (1344 AH), all the necessary preparations were made. Baba Tajuddin headed off in a procession to Karbala Medan once more, as he

normally did. This time, however, the journey was aborted when he barely reached the outskirts of Sakaradara. After covering this distance, Babaji stopped the procession, took the flag from one of the flag bearers, whose name was Wazir Ali, and repeated the following lines poetically:

The leader of the religion is the King of Madinah,

And the leader of the kings is Hussayn bin Ali.

Those who witnessed Baba Tajuddin recite these words noticed his majestic bearing. They saw him momentarily resemble Hazrat Ali bin Talib (ra), Hazrat Abbas (ra), and Hazrat Hussain (ra). The resemblance made the people near him eager to kiss his feet as a gesture of affection. It made the crowd denser. They watched as he expressed his exhilaration and passion. The atmosphere was electrifying.

Baba Tajuddin would never let anyone leave without a blessing. Although everyone still got what they wanted, on this occasion, he remarked: "The things I have of others, if they cannot be collected while I am alive, then I will return it to them while in the grave." After this brief moment of joy to celebrate the occasion and the remark he just made, Baba Tajuddin returned to Sakardara. His health did not permit him to complete the procession. His condition worsened on the 16th.

Baba Tajuddin's grand shahi baggi on display at the Chhota Tajbagh Darbar

Care of an Elder

On this occasion, Baba Tajuddin declined to give him permission... saying, “Then who will take care of your elder?” ...Seeing that the man really wanted to go, Baba Tajuddin acceded to his request... It was on the third day that Baba Tajuddin left this material world.

A headmaster in Nagpur, Farid Baba Khan Faza, applied for a post at a college in Hyderabad Deccan. One day, he received a call for an interview. Whenever he wanted to leave Nagpur, he would always ask his spiritual master, Baba Tajuddin, for permission and only leave when the permission was granted. This time, his own heart was set on going because he desired to be appointed to the college. Gaining the post was an opportunity to make progress in his career, and the salary was higher as well compared to what he was getting at the school.

Usually, Baba Tajuddin would grant him permission, and he would go, but on a few occasions, permission was denied, and it turned out to be a wise decision not to go. On this occasion, Baba Tajuddin declined to give him permission. When Farid Baba explained the reasons for wanting to go, which were promotion and a higher salary, Baba Tajuddin responded by saying, “Then who will take care of your elder?”

Farid Baba was unsure of exactly who Baba Tajuddin was referring to, as it could not mean any of his blood relatives. But he did know that Baba Tajuddin himself was very ill. Since his mind was fixated on the potential worldly benefits of going, he reiterated these and added, “When I get more pay, I will hire someone to take care of the elder”.

He said this, not knowing who had to be taken care of. Seeing that the man really wanted to go, Baba Tajuddin acceded to his request. He told him, “You are very stubborn and don’t listen. Okay, go as you wish, but go after three days, and give me some sand before you go because I have to get a lot of work done by you.” It was on the third day that Baba Tajuddin left this material world.

The Day of Separation

After trying to comfort those around him and praying for them, Baba Tajuddin laid back on the bed... With a final loud voice and a deep, long breath, the connection between his soul and earthly body was severed... News of the physical passing... spread like wildfire.

Six days after the Muharram procession set off, it was evident that Baba Tajuddin was very sick. He was ailing from a fever. On 18 Muharram, the fever became more severe. Maharaja Raghuji and his other faithful followers were all deeply worried and disturbed to see their master in this condition. For the past two months, Babaji had been giving signals indicating that he would not be around for much longer. So they were mentally prepared for this eventuality, but it was still difficult to see him suffering physically. For example, when Baba Tajuddin entered the palace through the main gate, he made it clear to the Maharaj that he would not be leaving from the same gate.

In his preparations, the Maharaja appointed several physicians to serve Baba Tajuddin as and when needed. Among them were Hakim Zafar Hussain, a devotee of Baba Tajuddin, and Dr. Dharmvir Munje. Another physician who admired him, Doctor Chulakar, checked Baba Tajuddin as well, but he, too, said there was nothing for which further treatment was possible. His words were: "I can't do a diagnosis because I can't understand what there is to diagnose. I can't figure out what the problem is, so what can I treat?"

By this time, many people were eager to see Baba Tajuddin, so Raghuji took the decision to call all those who wanted to see him to gather at the palace. The numbers grew over the course of the next few days. He requested on their behalf, "*Huzoor*, many people have come to see you. Shall I allow them to come in?" Baba Tajuddin smiled at him affectionately and replied, "Yes, please do."

On 26 Muharram, while the sun was rising in the early morning, Baba Tajuddin's well-wishers and servants noticed visible changes in his style and attitude. It became the cause of their unease that day. A large flock of birds also gathered at the palace, but the whole flock was eerily silent.

The day passed in worry and anxiety over Baba Tajuddin's health, except for the saint's own countenance, which remained calm and serene.

When the time of sunset approached, Baba Tajuddin was resting on his bed, surrounded by people praying for him to recover. Extremely perturbed and in discomfort, everyone's eyes were fixated on their master's blessed face. Thereupon, Baba Tajuddin immediately stood up from his bed and looked around at all those present with compassion and sympathy. He counselled them and then addressed them to allay their worries and anxieties with words of comfort and relief. He then raised his hands and prayed for them, although his manner of supplicating was different than normal because he was very sick.

After trying to comfort those around him and praying for them, Baba Tajuddin laid back on the bed. His final words were: "To God we belong, and to Him we return." With a final loud voice and a deep, long breath, the connection between his soul and earthly body was severed. The great Baba Tajuddin Nagpuri (ra) passed away on the evening of Monday, 17 August 1925 CE (26 Muharram 1344 AH) close to *maghrib* time. News of the physical passing of the great Crown of Saints, Baba Tajuddin, spread like wildfire throughout the palace, Sakardara, the rest of Nagpur, and beyond.

The passing of the Crown of Saints was a big shock to everyone who knew Baba Tajuddin. It was as if their lives had been ruined due to the separation from their beloved master. Tears flowed from people's eyes because he was dearer to them than their own close relatives. The whole city of Nagpur was engulfed in sounds of weeping and mourning for several days. Muslims and Hindus alike felt a deep loss as a result of the severing. People observed that some statues also shed tears of grief, including the household deity of the Maharaja.

The Maharaja was too distressed to handle the situation on his own, so he convened a committee of key disciples to make the necessary arrangements for Baba Tajuddin's *janaazah* and burial. It comprised Mawlana Najmuddin, Pehlwan Ghulam Nabi, Fariduddin, and Allama Yousuf Shah Taji. Baba Sahib's physical body was taken from the palace after 2.30am. On the morning of the 18th, it was taken around Nagpur's streets so that more people would get a chance to take a final glimpse of the Crown of Saints.

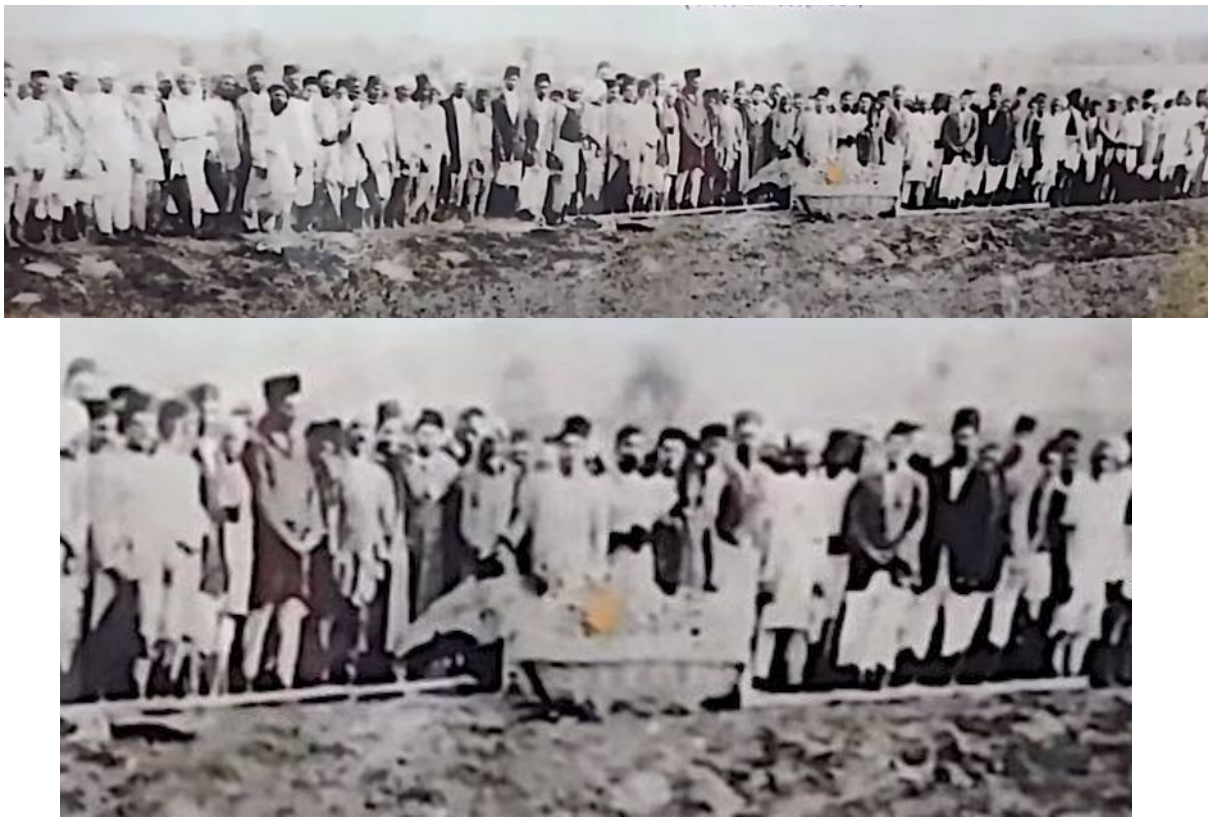
Janaazah of the Crown of Saints

Several hundreds of thousands of devotees... thronged to Sakardara, yearning for one last glimpse of their beloved saint... The funeral prayer was performed by Mawlana Syed Mahmood Ali Shah Deccani Sahib... He later revealed that he witnessed Baba Tajuddin standing out during his own funeral.

Several hundreds of thousands of devotees and others gathered from near and far, irrespective of their backgrounds, to attend the *janaazah* of the Crown of Saints. They thronged to Nagpur, yearning for one last glimpse of their beloved saint. For the burial, the very place was selected that Baba Tajuddin himself pointed out during his earthly life in Tajabad, whose soil he sniffed and described as good. The funeral procession proceeded from the Maharaja's palace and went through all the city areas he often toured to reach Tajabad.

Around 30,000 people were present at the funeral prayer. They included disciples, devotees, other saints, scholars, local inhabitants, and the general public. The funeral prayer was performed by Mawlana Syed Mahmood Ali Shah Deccani Sahib, a school teacher in Amravati, around 9am in the morning of Tuesday, 18 August 1925 CE (27 Muharram 1344 AH). He later revealed that he witnessed Baba Tajuddin standing out during his own funeral. The burial took place about an hour later.

The sand in Tajabad, where the grave was dug, was dry. Baba Tajuddin chose the spot himself and remarked that he liked the soil a few days before departing from this world. The grave was dug by Baba Amiran. It was ready by 10:30pm, when Maulana Najmuddin guided how the body was to be placed inside the grave. However, the public was not willing to listen, so efforts were made to control the people. It was then decided to keep the body to one side for a little longer so that more people could take a glimpse of Baba Tajuddin's face before retreating. This helped to lessen the crowd. Then, finally, the Maulana and Hakim Syed Zafar Hassan together lowered the body into the grave while others held the corners of the burial cloth.



Janaazah of Baba Tajuddin (ra): partial panoramic view (top), centre (bottom)

The building that now marks the spot where Baba Tajuddin's janaazah prayer was led; a closer view of the signboard (bottom)

The Reason for Departing

"People used to trouble me a lot. That's the reason I departed from this world..." Although he was able to guide people on the spiritual path, which he much preferred, most people had some or other health or material concerns. It is these concerns that bothered him.

After the *janaazah* of the Crown of Saints was over, Hakim Zafar later revealed that when he went down into the grave to lay his master to rest, he spoke with the saint while the Maulana had not yet entered. Hakim Sahib remarked, "O Baba Sahib! You said that I would stay with you for my entire life, but now you have gone into your grave." At this point, he saw Baba Tajuddin open his eyes. Babaji replied:

> *People used to trouble me a lot. That's the reason I departed from this world. Don't worry, though. I'm always with you.*

It was then that the rest of the burial took place, and everyone departed for their homes. After this incident, Hakim Zafar regularly visited the tomb alone at night. What Baba Tajuddin meant by his words in the grave was not that people worried or harassed him deliberately but that he himself was disturbed by the constant stream of physical and worldly problems the people came with. Although he was able to guide people on the spiritual path, which he much preferred, most people had some or other health or material concerns. It is these concerns that bothered him. Earlier in his life, he was able to take refuge in a lunatic asylum from the madhouse of this world [see A Haven from the Madhouse], but now the time had come to depart from the material world altogether.

News Reports of the Demise

News of the demise of Baba Tajuddin Nagpuri on 17 August 1925 (26 Muharram 1344) was published by various news outlets.

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News and obituaries

The Times of India reported the following from its correspondent in Nagpur on the very day of 17 August, in a column titled 'A Mahomedan Saint: Death of Hazrat Tajudin Sahib':

A MAHOMEDAN SAINT.

DEATH OF HAZRAT TAJUDIN, SAHIB.

(FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT).

NAGPUR, August 17.

Hazrat Tajuddin Sahib, the Mahomedan saint of Nagpur, who is reputed to have worked several miracles, died last evening. The news of his death was received with general regret in the town, and thousands of people of all denominations are streaming to Sakardara to pay their last respects He was regarded by the Mahomedans with the same reverence as the Kwaja Saheb of Ajmer, and by Hindus as an Avatar. The place of his burial has not yet been decided upon.

Times of India, 17 August 1925

Hazrat Tajuddin Sahib, the Mahomedan saint of Nagpur, who is reputed to have worked several miracles, died last evening. The news of his death was received with general regret in the town, and thousands of people of all denominations are streaming to Sakardara to pay their last respects. He was regarded by the Mahomedans with the same reverence as the Kwaja Saheb of Ajmer, and by Hindus as an Avatar. The place of his burial has not yet been decided upon.

The Madras Mail and Andhra Patrika, a weekly newspaper in the Telugu-speaking region, described the soul of Baba Tajuddin as an incarnation of Lord Rama from their Hindu perspective. The following words were published on 22 August 1925 in the latter:

Ram appeared in one of his lifecycles of existence in the form of Baba Tajuddin and left on 17th August 1925. It is so sad that the world did not recognise him.

In Bejar's 'Madina' newspaper on 13 December 1925, the following was reported about Baba Tajuddin helping people:

During the life of Baba Sahib, people would come from far away places to visit him. They approached him for their needs, and he prayed to Allah for them to be helped in whatever matter affected them. Among the devotees were patients, handicapped, those suffering from leprosy or bothered by evil spirits, and other needy persons. They lived at his court to assist everyone needing his favour. The public kitchen was always open, and there were constant provisions for hundreds of poor and needy persons and orphans at the court of Baba Sahib.

Weeping Idols

There were several reports of idols weeping at the time of the departure of the Crown of Saints, Baba Tajuddin... There were so many witnesses and those who experienced the same.

There were several reports of idols weeping at the time of the departure of the Crown of Saints, Baba Tajuddin. The incident of tears shed by the household deity of Raja Raghuji was reported in the Times of India. A strange phenomenon was then reported on 18 August in Madras, in which many idols of various Hindu deities began shedding tears the very moment Baba Tajuddin departed from this world. Additionally, many people reported seeing idols telling them in their dreams that:

> *The idols were crying because a very pious personality had left this materialistic world, and not many took him seriously.*

Another major incident of weeping idols was reported a few days later in the Evening Post, dated 25 August 1925. It mentioned Mr. Narayana Rao Hadan, among thousands of others who witnessed tears flowing from the marble idols of Vithal and Rukmani Devi at the Pandurang Mandir in Itwari Nagar for a continuous period of twelve hours. All these incidents were newsworthy not only because idols were seen weeping but also because there were so many witnesses and those who experienced the same.

Vithal and Rukmani Devi

Promises and Arrangements

Baba Tajuddin made a special promise to his disciples, devotees, and future spiritual aspirants before departing from this world. He also gave a promise to Maharaja Raghuji Rao and made special arrangements for two particular workers.

Baba Tajuddin made a special promise to his disciples, devotees, and future spiritual aspirants before departing from this world. He also gave a promise to Maharaja Raghuji Rao and made special arrangements for two particular workers – Bahadur and an employee of the Maharaja. Another special arrangement was for the construction of his *darbar* in Tajabad [see The Late Night Delivery].

Spiritual Aspirants and the Maharaja

Maharaja Raghuji Rao Bhonsle V

The special promise Baba Tajuddin made to his disciples, other devotees, and spiritual aspirants generally was to continue his worldly duty until making 125,000 saints. This is an ongoing process. He also promised Maharaja Raghuji Rao that Baba Sahib's couch would remain in his place despite the move from his palace to Tajabad. It remains preserved to this day [see further below].

Bahadur

Baba Tajuddin's horse, Bahadur [see Trips on a Cart], was very disturbed at its master's passing. When the items needed for the burial were required, it was expected they would be brought over in his own carriage, drawn by his own horse. That is how things were arranged, but Bahadur suddenly

stopped a short distance after leaving the palace and raised one leg. When Hera Lal checked what the matter was, he was unable to feel the bones of its raised leg. It was as if a long lump of flesh was just clinging to its body. Bahadur did not show any signs of physical pain except for the tears in its eyes. It was not willing to eat anything either.

The things they needed to take urgently were, therefore, taken by other means. Meanwhile, Bahadur was taken to be treated by a vet, but the condition only worsened. Three days later, Bahadur died. It was then buried in Tajabad, not far from where its master lay. Baba Tajuddin chose and arranged this spot himself before passing away.

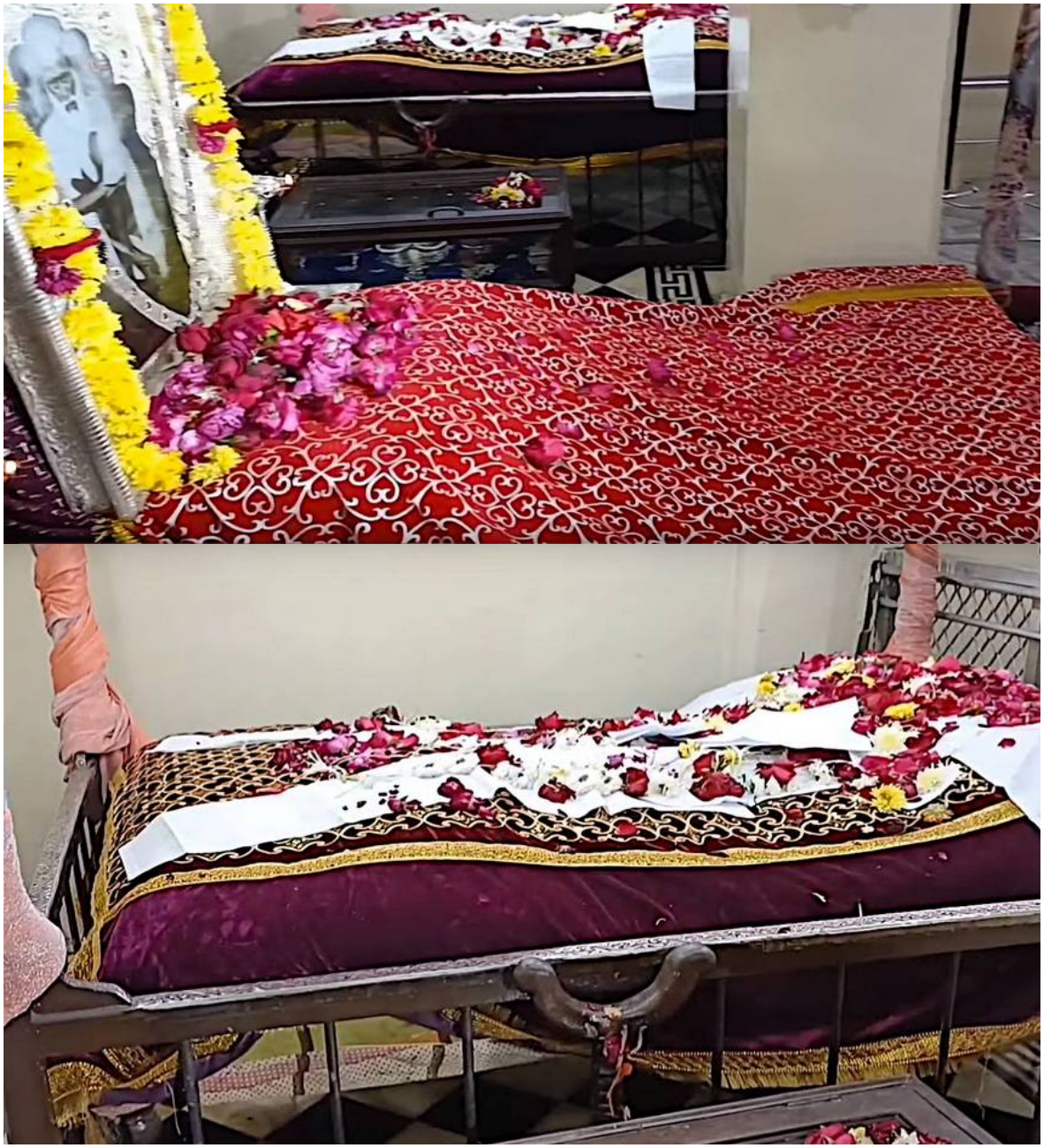
Bahadur buried within the Taj Dargah complex in Tajabad

Blessed to stay

A certain Qazi Aminuddin, the Maharaja's employee, mentioned that he went to Tajabad ten days after Baba Tajuddin's demise. While standing a little distance before the shrine, he said to Babaji silently in his heart, "You came from Sakardara to Tajabad, and now many others are settling here too. As per your instruction, I've been appointed to Maharaja Raghuji's court, so with your permission, I'd like to come here too."

At that point, Hazrat Karim Badshah Arifullah, who was favoured by Baba Tajuddin, came near him and told him, "There's an order for you to give salaam to the Raja Sahib and to go and live in the Lal Kothi. The one close to God has not departed from it." He was thus blessed to stay in the very Red Bungalow where Babaji resided during his earthly life.

The original Lal Kothi of Raghuji Rao II has since been demolished, but a 'Chhota Tajbagh Darbar' has been constructed on a part of its grounds, situated near Laxmi Narayan temple. Baba Tajuddin's belongings and artefacts are now safeguarded on its premises.



Baba Tajuddin's couch (top) and palang (bottom) used in the palace, now preserved at the Chhota Tajbagh Darbar

Payment to a Milkmaid

Baba Tajuddin's physical departure from this world did not prevent him from fulfilling the promises made during his earthly life... Baba Tajuddin kept his word, so the lady was in for a surprise.

Baba Tajuddin's physical departure from this world did not prevent him from fulfilling the promises made during his earthly life. Besides the promise made to his devotees and the Maharaja, another case involved an outstanding payment that had to be made to a milkmaid. It was cleared within a few days after his own funeral.

Subhanuddin was one of Baba Tajuddin's *mureeds* who stayed with him constantly. He used to get milk from a milkmaid who lived in Belpeth. She supplied milk to Baba Tajuddin and a few of his *mureeds*. Once, Subhanuddin could not pay the milkmaid in time, so she stopped the supply of milk. Baba Tajuddin ordered her to continue supplying the milk. When she complained of the overdue payment, Baba Tajuddin assured her, saying, "Continue to give him milk regularly. I'll pay for it."

The milkmaid continued to supply milk till the day Baba Tajuddin departed from this world. She then gave up all hope of receiving her remaining dues. However, Baba Tajuddin kept his word, so the lady was in for a surprise. On the fourth day after Baba Tajuddin's departure, while she was bathing her child outside her hut, a *faqeer* came by with something in his hand. She did not recognise who the *faqeer* was.

The *faqeer* said, "Here is the money for the milk you supplied to Subhanuddin at Tajuddin Baba's assurance". He then handed her the exact amount due, of 78-0-2 rupees, that was in his hand before leaving and disappearing from sight. Since Subhanuddin did not know of this arrangement to pay, it was understood that the *faqeer* was Baba Tajuddin himself in disguise.

The Late Night Delivery

The old man specifically instructed him to deliver during the night... when he looked back, there was neither any sign of the cart and its rider nor the old man in the distance.

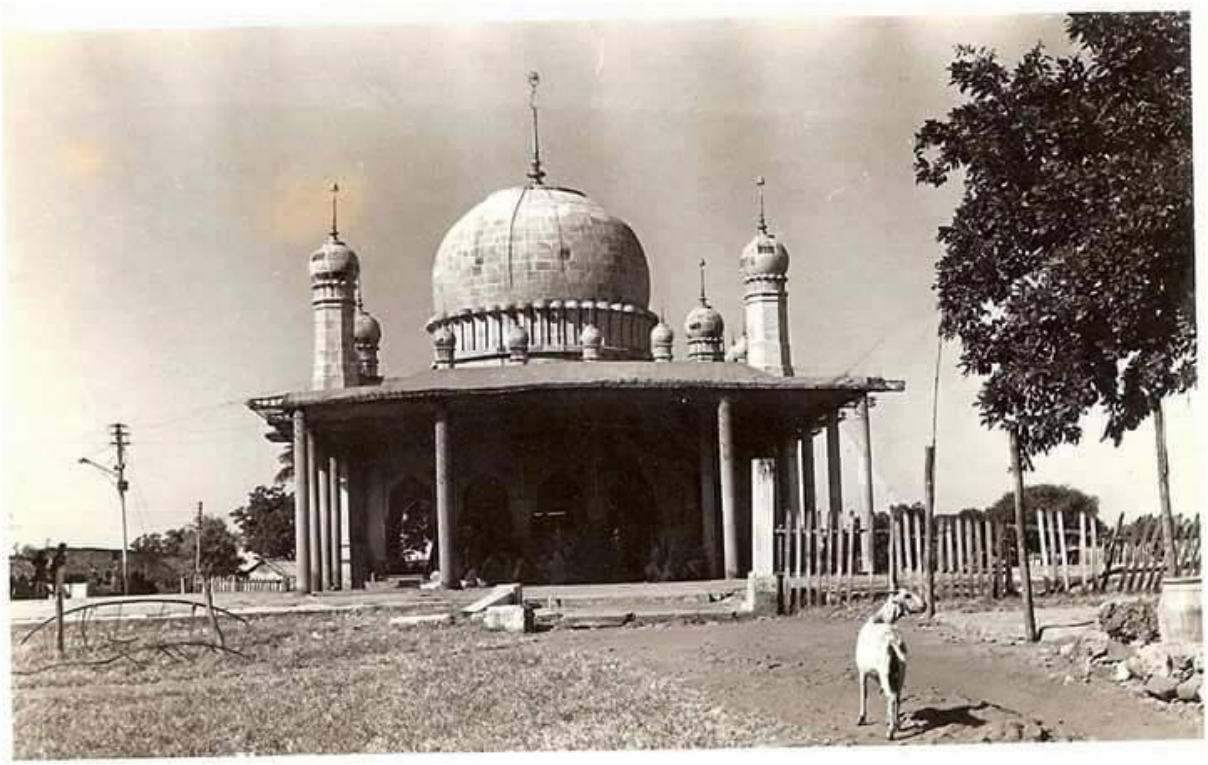
When the *darbar* (shrine) was being constructed for Baba Tajuddin, a certain devotee named Muhammad Nawaz joined the project. He was a bricklayer by profession and was appointed as a project supervisor. All the required materials were brought in by truck, and the construction process was well underway. One rainy evening, all the materials had been used, and there was no more sand, cement, or mortar left. Due to heavy rains, the paths were muddy and blocked. It was not possible to bring more materials. All the labourers were preparing to leave, but Nawaz's duty was nightly supervision, so he remained there. It was decided to wait till the morning to bring more supplies.

Very late that night, Nawaz noticed a bull cart coming his way. It appeared to be bringing sacks of construction material and some bricks. It was unexpected, not only because of the timing but also because no one had ordered to have the materials delivered in this way. Moreover, all routes leading to the area were still blocked, so it was not clear how the cart managed to arrive while it was still raining. Nawaz got up and went over to the cart to take a closer look. He was soaking wet, but he managed to ask the rider to explain what he was seeing. The rider's face was covered by a cloak except for his eyes, and he spotted an old man standing some distance behind the cart.

Muhammad Nawaz was told that during the day, a few people, including an old man among them, came and pointed the rider to these supplies from a place not far from the *darbar*. They told him that they had paid for them, and when he went to collect them, they were dry despite the rain. It was as if it had not rained at all. He, therefore, had the materials put on his cart. Furthermore, the old man specifically instructed him to deliver during the night. That was why he brought them over at this time. No sooner had Nawaz looked the other way to see where the materials could be placed, they were already there. When he looked back, there

was neither any sign of the cart and its rider nor the old man in the distance.

In the early morning, when the other labourers arrived to resume their work, they were surprised to see the materials ready for them to use right away. Although Nawaz was told how the materials were sent, it was still unclear who the senders were. Despite attempts to identify them, they could not find out what really happened. Strangely, even the rider of the cart and the cart itself seemed mysterious and could not be identified. It remains a mystery to this day. The materials proved to be of exceptionally fine quality and were more substantial in quantity than they first appeared. Deep down, Muhammad Nawaz had a feeling that the old man was none other than his spiritual master, for whom the *darbar* was being constructed. Perhaps his feeling was spot on?



Baba Tajuddin's darbar, original construction

Baba Tajuddin Dargah in Tajbagh: main south entrance (baab-e-tajul anbiya) (top), front view (middle), left side view (bottom)

Baba Tajuddin's darbar in 2020 (view from inside the north gate)

The dome of the Taj darbar (previous design)

Urs and the Shahi Sandal

People from all walks of life, irrespective of their creed and caste, assemble to commemorate [the urs] every year on the 25th to 27th of Muharram... This custom befits the Crown of Saints.

Tajul Awliya was a great saint who lived in Nagpur but is remembered throughout the world, especially on the occasion of his *urs* (death anniversary). People from all walks of life, irrespective of their creed and caste, assemble to commemorate it every year on the 25th to 27th of Muharram at his *darbar* (shrine) in Nagpur and elsewhere. Those in Nagpur first seek his blessings in the Maharaja's palace in Sakardara. It is visited because Baba Tajuddin himself said to the Maharaja that his couch would not leave his house even after thousands of years. A procession then traces the same route from Sakardara to Tajabad as was led by the funeral procession, which then returns to Chillagah in Sakardara.

Manqabat Qawwalis

Rizwan and Faizan Sabri Qawwal

Baba Tajuddin was very fond of *qawwalis* [see Mehfil-e-Samaa]. Many *manqabats* and *manqabat qawwalis* have since been written in his honour. They are more frequently read or performed on his *urs*. Here are two lines from one such *manqabat qawwali* sung by Rizwan and Faizan Sabri Qawwal:

> *Taj wale Baba ka urs jab bhi aata ha, Rahmaton ki baarish me har koi nahaata ha*

Whenever the urs of the crown of saints comes, Everyone revels in the rain of mercy.

The Shahi Sandal

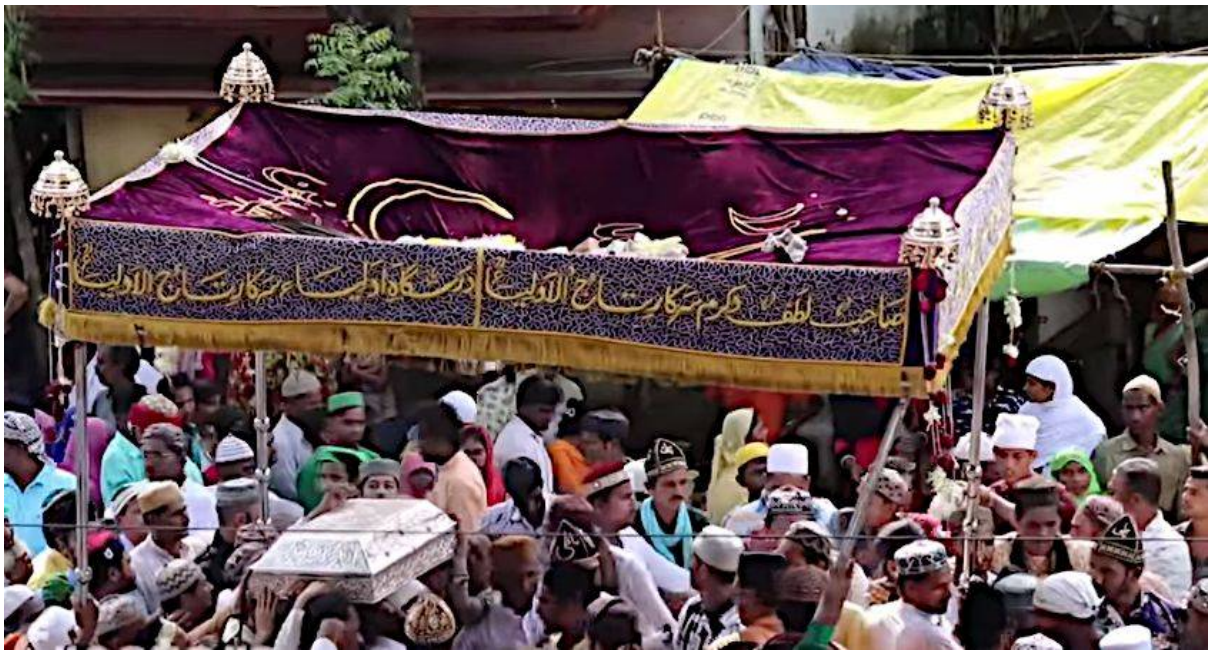
The Shahi Sandal (being carried during an urs)

An important part of Baba Tajuddin's *urs* procession is the carrying of a *shahi sandal* (royal sandal). It is sandalwood powder inside a decorated pot that is later used to form a paste for anointing the inner sanctum of the *dargah* (tomb). It is carried with the utmost care and respect, as befits a precious object, and in a manner that displays the magnificence of its owner. The sandalwood paste, when formed, has inherent cooling, calming, and fragrant properties. It is also used in natural medicine, especially in times of disease and calamity.

The story of the *shahi sandal* began when Nagpur and other central-province areas were in the grip of a severe cholera outbreak in 1875-1876. Baba Tajuddin was then a young boy. He spent long periods in a deep absorption of God and visiting Hazrat Abdullah Shah Qadri. It was part of the fourth wave of a wider cholera pandemic in the 19th century. There was also an influenza pandemic in 1918-1920 and a sleeping sickness that lasted longer. Nagpur was again badly affected by cholera during the sixth wave in the early 1920s. Thousands were killed.

When the situation became severe in 1922, the people of Nagpur got together, went to Raghuji Rao's palace, and pleaded with Baba Tajuddin to do something. Babaji granted responsibility to Muhammad Hussayn Taji. He gave him two rupees to obtain sandalwood powder. It was the 26th of Muharram. The custom of taking the *shahi sandal* blessed by the saint through the streets helped to stem the spread of cholera in the city. The custom was repeated two years later, and since then, it has been observed every year except for the year of the saint's passing in 1925. It is no coincidence that this is done on the first day of Baba Tajuddin's *urs*. The *shahi sandal* also symbolises unity and harmony because people of

all faiths and walks of life attend the occasion. This custom befits the Crown of Saints because he was a saint for the whole of humanity.



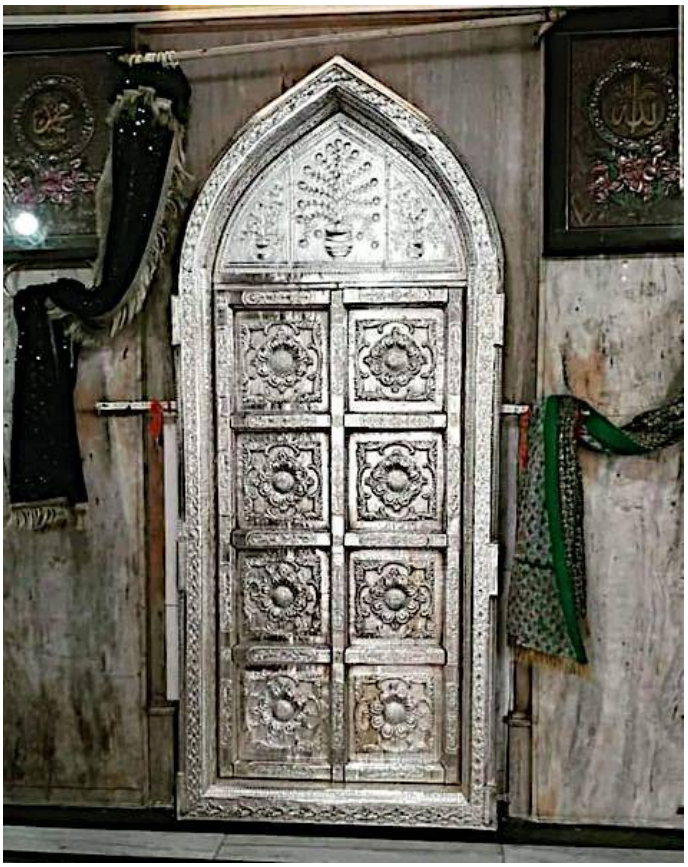
Shahi sandal being carried during Urs 2019

More urs scenes

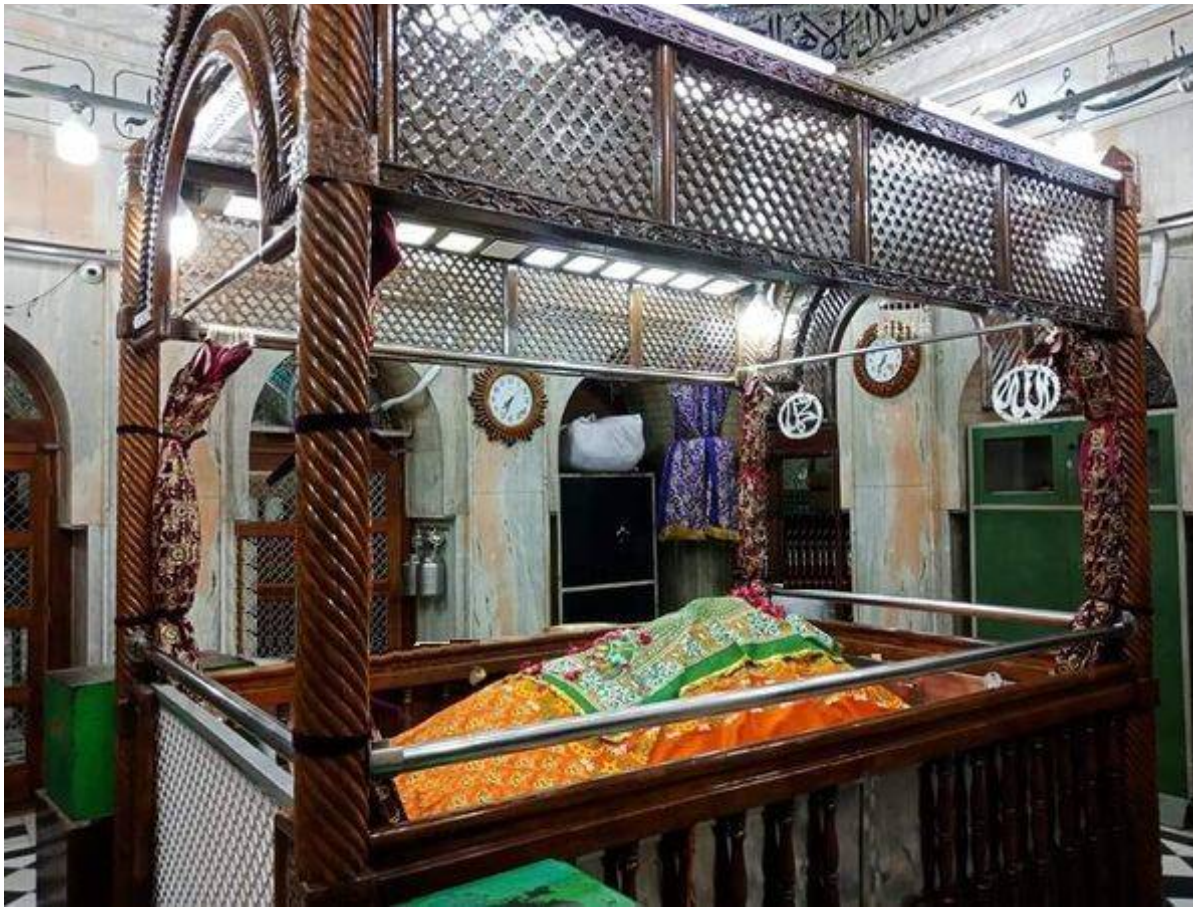
Horse posture re-enactment

Parcham kushai (flag hoisting)

Taj Darbar decorated with lights during a recent urs (top)



The jannati darwazah (paradise door) inside the Taj Darbar leading to Baba Tajuddin's tomb, which is only opened during the urs for two and a half days starting from the 25th (right) (Other entrances are used at other times)



Baba Tajuddin's qabar mubarak in the present times (top)

A fuller view of the enclosure around Baba Tajuddin's qabar mubarak (bottom)

Curing the Disabled after Death

Baba Tajuddin's departure from this world did not put a stop to the miracles experienced by those who sought his help. In particular, he continued in his role of curing the disabled after death.

Baba Tajuddin's departure from this world did not put a stop to the miracles experienced by those who sought his help. In particular, he continued in his role of curing the disabled after death. Two such incidents are presented here.

The lame beggar

A lame beggar at Nagpur railway station named Mazkorah was unable to walk after a car accident. From then on, he would crawl on the ground and beg for food and money. He once paid a visit to Baba Tajuddin's shrine to have his handicap cured. Several weeks passed after Mazkorah made the request at the shrine. When there was no change in his condition, he spoke in a very rude and foul tone to Baba Tajuddin for not curing him.

Subsequently, Baba Tajuddin appeared in his dream, wearing a white turban and ordering him to stand up straight. He repeated this order four times, but the man did not move. After ordering Mazkorah once more, Baba Tajuddin gave him some *mithai* and a glass of juice. He then pushed, kicked, and jerked the man before ordering him again. Mazkorah realised he was gaining strength, so he made an attempt to stand up, which he did. To his amazement, he was able to stand up straight and walk about, just as he had been able to before the accident.

The story of the man's miraculous cure was reported in the 18 July 1926 edition of The Times of India, less than one year after the saint's departure from this world:

> *A strange news has come from Nagpur about a person who became lame in a car accident and lived near Nagpur Railway Station in a poor condition who survived by begging. It is said that he became well in one night after visiting and praying at the mausoleum of a Muslim Saint in Nagpur known as Baba Tajuddin. Since the saint passed away, his health did not*

recover at all for some weeks, so he was very much disappointed and disheartened. That night however, he saw Baba Sahib in a dream wearing a white turban who gave orders to that lame person to stand up straight. He was unable to stand at once, but after being given some mithai to eat, some juice to drink and being kicked with the order to stand, he immediately stood up straight.

The case of Jeer Bano

A 7-year-old girl named Jeer Bano was unable to speak or walk. She was taken to several doctors and healers. Her parents spent a huge amount of money to cure her handicap, but nothing worked. All their efforts were in vain. Her father recalled that her mother took Jeer to Dada Bhai Gazdar, who gave the girl holy water and some sandalwood from an *urs* of Baba Tajuddin. He told them, "You should request that if your daughter is cured, you will present a *chadar* (sheet) of roses for the tomb or something else, as you can afford".

Jeer Bano's mother made the request, and Dada Bhai Gazdar then gave a time frame for when her daughter would be cured. As a result of this, Jeer Bano was cured within the given time frame, even though Baba Tajuddin had departed from this world before then.

Ocean of Spiritual Grace

He promised not to rest in peace until after transforming 125,000 of his loving devotees into saints, so his mission continues to this day. He remains an ocean of spiritual grace and blessings for all humanity. He still guides spiritual aspirants.

Baba Tajuddin served numerous people during his earthly life, not only Muslims but also those of other religions. Before his physical departure, he promised not to rest in peace until after transforming 125,000 of his loving devotees into saints, so his mission continues to this day. He remains an ocean of spiritual grace and blessings for all humanity. He still guides spiritual aspirants like he did when he was in his physical body. Sometimes, he appears in their dreams, but to some, he also appears physically to give guidance as necessary.

Notably, Baba Tajuddin's training instructions are adapted for each individual. For example, he advises some to eat little, but others to eat more, or some to seclude themselves, but others to remain in the open. In this way, he has been guiding and mentoring quite a number of pious people with his love and compassion. They include people of different religions and both genders. Apart from his grandson, Qalandar Baba Awliya, the founder of the Azeemi Sufi Order, a few other names stand out in particular:

- Mawlana **Abdul Kareem** (d.1947), aka Baba Yousuf Shah
- Khwaja **Ali Amiruddin**
- **Fareeduddin Shah**, aka Kareem Baba
- **Fatah Muhammad Shah**
- **Insan Ali Shah** (1845-1960)
- **Kamli Wale Shah**, aka Godar Shah
- **Maryam Bibi** (d. 1919), aka Bi Amma [see Spiritual Wealth]
- Baba **Qadir** (1899-1962) [see The Boy from Vizianagram]

- Qazi **Amjad Ali Shah** (d.1957) [see No Food but Tea and Vigils, and Instructions to Migrate]

Baba Yousuf Shah Taji

Fareeduddin Shah Taji

Insan Ali Shah Taji

Mawlana Abdul Kareem (Baba Yousuf Shah)

Baba Yousuf Shah was the key successor of the Taji Sufi Order. Baba Tajuddin declared him as his son and gave him the key to his treasure [see The Key to Baba Sahib's Treasure]. He sent him to Pakistan to spread the mission after the partition [see Instructions to Migrate].

Khwaja Ali Amiruddin

Khwaja Ali Amiruddin was born in Nagpur. He never spoke or bothered to eat properly until he was six years old. When he was taken to Baba Tajuddin, he advised others not to aggravate him. He told them they did not know his real status. His parents returned to their own home and left Ali Amiruddin in Baba Sahib's service in Waki. He wore a garland of live snakes. It is said that whoever carried him on their back would have their wish granted. He also lived at the Maharaja's palace in Sakardara for a while. Because he was spending too much of his time in a state of *wajd*, Babaji taught him how to ground himself and gain elegance.

Fareeduddin Shah (Kareem Baba)

Fareeduddin Shah was a young boy who desired to become an ascetic like Baba Tajuddin. He was blessed with gnosis and became a spiritual healer [see The Vessel of Light and Within the Mirror].

Fatah Muhammad Shah

Fatah Muhammad Shah hailed from Afghanistan. He met Baba Tajuddin at the lunatic asylum and ended up remaining there for the rest of his life. On their first meeting, Baba Tajuddin said to him, while pointing to his cell, "This place will never be vacant" [see From a Prison to a Palace]. Fatah Shah spent considerable time with his master while undergoing spiritual training. He immersed himself in *muraqba* every day and night and was accomplished at entering the trance state.

When Baba Tajuddin was released from the asylum in 1908, he kept Fatah Muhammad there as his representative. Maharaja Raghuji Rao tried to get him released after Baba Tajuddin passed away in 1925 and invited him to stay in Sakaradara, but recalling the responsibility Baba Tajuddin gave him, he said, "That place will have to be approached above the heads. Why do you wish to make me go there sooner?" Fatah Shah, therefore, continued to stay in the asylum till his demise, when his body was carried above the heads of Baba Tajuddin's followers, and he was brought to be buried in Tajabad.

Insan Ali Shah

Insan Ali Shah was born Ali Shah and named 'Insan' by Baba Tajuddin after freeing him from the restraints people had put on him due to failing to recognise his spiritual abilities. He assisted the silsila by helping others with various problems [see No More Restraints].

Kamli Wale Shah (Godar Shah)

Kamli Wale Shah, later called Godar Shah by Baba Tajuddin, was an accomplished man who once spent 40 days in *khalwat* (spiritual retreat) standing on the sea by a shrine. He then went into Baba Tajuddin's service in Sakardara, for whom he was among his dear ones. He made a tent for himself by the edge of a road near that of another *mureed* named Chand Khan and was hardly ever seen coming out of it. Chand Khan would often sit near Godar Shah's entrance, sing in praise of Baba Tajuddin, and do what he could to look after him. Godar Shah became so self-extinguished in the presence of his spiritual master, Baba Tajuddin, that he became indifferent to everything else in the world.

Other pious souls of the Taji Sufi Order

There were many other notable and pious personages initiated and blessed by Baba Tajuddin and other pious souls of the Taji Sufi Order. They include:

- Hazrat Baba **Abdur Rahman**
- Hazrat **Allah Kareem**
- **Bibi Amman** Sahiba
- Hazrat **Dua Baba**
- Maharaja **Ghoji Rao**
- Hazrat **Ghulam Mustafa**, to whom Baba Tajuddin gave the title of Miskeen Shah
- Hazrat **Hakeem Naeemuddin**
- **Jalaluddin Mir Surkh**
- **Kunwar Asghar Ali Khan**, who came to be known as Albale Shah Yousufi, a *mureed* of Yousuf Shah
- Hazrat **Muhammad Abdul Aziz** (aka Nana Mian) [see Promoted from Black to Red]
- Hazrat **Muhammad Ghaus Baba**
- **Nani Sahiba**
- **Nita Anand Baba** Neel Kant Rao
- Hazrat **Qadir Muhiyuddin**
- Hazrat **Rasul Baba**
- **Sukku Bai**
- **Zaheen Shah Baba** (1902-1978) was a *mureed* of Yousuf Shah. He was a scholar like Yousuf Shah and also a philosopher, writer, and poet. He translated Shaykh Ibn 'Arabi's (ra) books (Fusus al-Hikam and Fatuhat al-Makiyyah) and one book of Al-Hallaj into Urdu. Besides Urdu poetry, he wrote Tajul Awliya, a biography of Baba Tajuddin, among other works. He became the caretaker of Yousuf Shah's shrine in Mewa Shah, Karachi [see The Partitioning of Hindustan].

Saints and Shrines

Baba Tajuddin met or had contact or collaborated with several notable contemporary and past saints of other Sufi orders and visited several Sufi shrines during his earthly life.

Baba Tajuddin met or had contact or collaborated with several notable contemporary and past saints of other Sufi orders and visited several Sufi shrines during his earthly life. He was thus blessed, and his blessings also poured through other avenues. It continues to do so even outside his geographical region and Sufi chain.

Meetings with saints and visits to shrines in early life

During his early life in Kamptee, the young Tajuddin met Hazrat Abdullah Shah Naushahi [see Never to Hurt Others' Feelings] and often visited Hazrat Masum Ali Shah's shrine [see Regaining Worldly Awareness] as well. When the time came for Abdullah Shah to pass over (~1878), he drank some juice and gave the rest to Tajuddin. In so doing, he conferred spiritual grace. Thereafter, it was Tajuddin's habit to wait patiently outside his *darbar* out of respect, as he hesitated to enter immediately.

Darbar of Abdullah Shah Naushahi (left) and Sayyad Masum Ali Shah (right) (present)

After Abdullah Shah Naushahi's passing, when the railway line was being constructed to connect Kamptee with the centre of Nagpur, it was

passing too close to the graveyard next to his shrine. Overnight, the track was displaced further out, which perplexed the British. This happened thrice before they conceded to accepting the new position laid by whom they suspected was Abdullah Shah Naushahi from his tomb. Elsewhere, the young Tajuddin met Hazrat Dawud Makki Shah Sabiri Chishti in spirit in Sagar [see Lessons in the Woods] and Shah Afzal Biyabani [see The Majzoob Soldiers] in Hyderabad while he was in the army.

Meetings with saints and visits to shrines in Nagpur

Dargah of Qutub-e-Nagpur, Hazrat Baba Baghdadi Shah (top left); Sawaliya Amma Dargah (top right); Meetha Neem Shareef (bottom)

Baba Tajuddin frequently met the saint Mahmood Ali Shah in Nagpur. He was popularly called Hazrat Baghdadi Shah because he migrated from Baghdad. His darbar is in Shatranjpur. Baba Tajuddin also visited several other shrines of past saints in Nagpur and its surrounding areas. They included, in particular, the shrines of Hazrat Baba Sayyad Shah Jalaluddin Meer Surkh (ra), called Aala Hazrat, and that of Sawaliya Amma on Dighori Road. Aala Hazrat's shrine acquired the name Meetha Neem Shareef because he used to pray in front of a neem tree whose bitter leaves turned sweet.

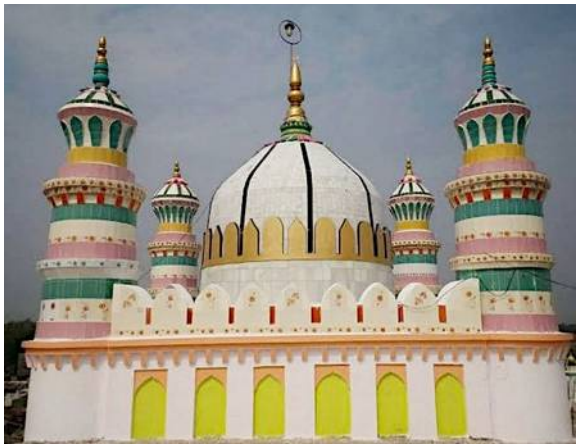
Meetings with saints and visits to shrines in Waki

Besides Kabul Kandhar [see A Portal to Afghanistan], Khapa was one of the few other places situated near Waki that Baba Tajuddin visited and stayed briefly after being released from the asylum.

Khapa Shareef Dargah of Lashkar Shah Shaheed

Whenever passing through the area, he would stop outside the entrance and give salaam from there. He would send Kashinath Rao inside instead on his behalf. He never went inside its premises out of respect for all the martyrs buried there, as he was unsure where their blood had been spilled and preferred not to step on such places. Baba Lashkar Shah fought and was martyred here, along with several other devotees, in a fight against a group of cannibals. He was passing by and came to the aid of locals who were very much troubled by their barbaric and satanic activities in the area. Baba Lashkar Shah's head was severed in the battle and is buried separately.

Visits to other saints and shrines elsewhere

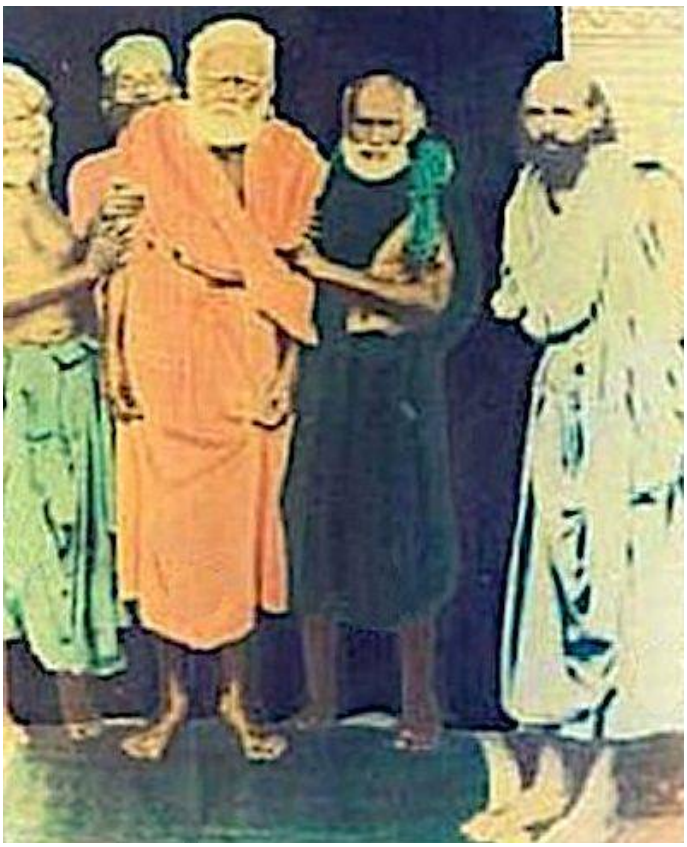


Dargah of Dada Hayat Qalandar (left) and Khwaja Gharib Nawaz (right) (present)

Besides Sagar and Hyderabad, Baba Tajuddin is known to have visited Chhindwara and Karnataka outside his region. In the latter, he visited the *dargah* of Dada Hayat Mir Qalandar (969-1039) in Mangrulpir, who hailed from Afghanistan and was the first *qalandar* in the sub-continent, and Malur, among other places. Baba Tajuddin also frequently interacted with Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti in spirit [see Reinstated by Khwaja Sahib], the Sultan of Hind. Other well-known Muslim saints with whom Baba Tajuddin interacted but apparently did not meet physically included Khwaja Nizami [see A Glistening and Sparkling Body], Hazrat Babajan of Poona [see The Rose-Faced Pathani], and Sai Baba of Shirdi [see The Golden Tree].

Chishti Sufis: Khwaja Moinuddin (left); Khwaja Nizami (centre); Sai Baba of Shirdi (right)

Like Baba Tajuddin, Aalam Paana, Hazrat Haji Sayid Waris Ali Shah (1817-1905), founder of the Warsi Sufi Order, had the ability to heal with a simple touch or glance. He had a sharp gaze and memory. He is also remembered for walking on foot to perform hajj eleven times during the course of extensive travels over a span of 14 years and for being one of the first Sufi saints to have visited Europe. His shrine is in Dewa, Barabanki, Uttar Pradesh. A meeting of the two saints was once captured in a memorable photo.



Baba Tajuddin (in black) with Waris Ali Shah (in an orange robe)

Blessings in other places and through other avenues

When the new country of Pakistan came into being, Baba Tajuddin's grace continued to flow through his mureeds who migrated there [see Instructions to Migrate]. There were also reports of sightings of Baba Tajuddin in Pakistan [see Sightings in Pakistan]. Besides the Taji Sufi Order, Baba Tajuddin is remembered in the Azeemi Sufi Order, through which his blessings continue to pour [see Silsila Azeemia]. Notable mureeds of other faiths met Baba Tajuddin physically as well. Among them were Meher Baba [see The Heavenly Rose] and Upasani Maharaj [see Perfect Spiritual Masters], who became saints themselves.

Other High-Profile Personages

Baba Tajuddin met or had contact or collaborated with many high-profile personages, famous in the eyes of the populace other than saints. They included rajahs, doctors, political leaders, people of other high posts, and great thinkers.

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Baba Sahib's Moon

Maharaja Raghuji Rao was a prominent Raja close to Baba Tajuddin but not the only one. Another whom he called 'My Moon' was Raja Muhammad Adam Shah. Baba Tajuddin often went to his home, and the two were very close. Whenever Baba Sahib desired to visit him at his house, he arranged a special baggi but never sat in the raja's seat. This was done out of respect for someone with a princely status.

Other famous people

Some non-Muslim personages mentioned in several episodes in this volume, by virtue of spending considerable time with their spiritual master, became highly, spiritually adept themselves. They included Maharaja Raghuji Rao V and Kashinath Rao. A few famous people, such as Mahatma Gandhi, also gained valuable advice from Baba Tajuddin [see Gandhiji's Crows], while others, such as the Ali Brothers, failed to get the blessings they sought [see An Appointment with Taj Baba].

Some figures stand out likewise for only briefly meeting Baba Tajuddin, but they succeeded in making considerable contributions to society. They included Nawab Siddiq Ali Khan [see The Swordless Soldier], Dr. Syed Mahmood [see The Red Turban to End Conflict], and Sir Benjamin [see Favours of Sir Benjamin]. Among other famous Muslims who had a profound impact was the poet and thinker Allama Iqbal, who corresponded with Baba Tajuddin [see Shaad Iqbal]. He advocated for the creation of Pakistan.

The Key to Baba Sahib's Treasure

Baba Tajuddin announced to the gathering that Yousuf Shah was his son who possessed the key to his treasure of knowledge.

A renowned intellectual of Islamic knowledge became a prominent figure in the Taji Sufi Order. He was Shamsul Ulama Mawlana Muhammad Abdul Kareem (1885-1947) from Jaipur, whom Baba Tajuddin later called Baba Yousuf Shah. He acquired extensive Islamic knowledge by studying under the tutelage of Ahmad Raza Khan Barelwi, who gave him special attention. Although he graduated with distinction, a void remained, and he wanted greater satisfaction. He sought to expand into the remaining domain of Islamic spirituality to learn the *tariqah* as well.

Mawlana Abdul Kareem (Baba Yousuf Shah Taji)

The university's vice-chancellor, Nani Mian, trained him to an extent and made him experience *wajd*, but Abdul Kareem wanted more. So, he prayed for three days at Khwaja Gharib Nawaz's shrine around 1915 to be led to a living saint and get initiated. He found Sufi Abdul Hakeem, learnt from him, and got initiated into the Sabri Chishti Sufi Order. But his mentor said he had given all he could and instructed him to serve Baba Tajuddin instead.

When he reached Nagpur and saw Baba Tajuddin in an intoxicated state, he wondered why he had been sent to a place where it seemed unlikely he would be able to learn anything. Babaji ordered for him to be taken out. After being removed, he remembered that it was an order from his first spiritual mentor to go to Baba Tajuddin, so he re-entered, this time

in a more receptive state. Baba Tajuddin looked at him intently, and grace flowed into him.

Abdul Kareem then took off his scholarly gown and donned the garb of a *faqeer*. Baba Tajuddin sent him to Kathiawar and other places to spread the spiritual mission, which he did. Thousands of scholars were initiated at his hands. It was Baba Tajuddin's single gaze of that led him to achieve all this. He was now called Baba Yousuf Shah.

Baba Tajuddin was speaking about the martyrdom of Hazrat Ali during a *mehfil* on the evening of 21 Ramadan in 1925, designated as 'Mawla Ali Day'. The emotional atmosphere kept Babaji charged, so much so that he soon became spiritually intoxicated. It took a while before he regained worldly awareness, by which time it was late into the night.

He took hold of Yousuf Shah's hand, sat him on his own seat, placed an *imamah* on him, and took off the garlands around his neck and put them on his mureed's neck. He then announced to the gathering that Yousuf Shah was his son who possessed the key to his treasure of knowledge. He also said that whoever pledged to be initiated at his hands would in effect get initiated at the hands of Baba Tajuddin himself.

Shrine of Yousuf Shah Taji in Mewa Shah, Karachi

Sarkar Yousuf Shah Taji became the key successor to Baba Tajuddin and was sent to Karachi when Pakistan was created [see Instructions to Migrate]. He departed from this world in 1947 after migrating. Before that, he handed over responsibility to his beloved successor, Albale Shah Yousufi (Kunwar Asghar Ali Khan). Sarkar Yousuf Shah's shrine is in Mewa Shah, Karachi.

The Vessel of Light

He was instructed from afar to spread his shirt. Baba Tajuddin placed the Quran on it and marked out a verse stating that God is to be found wherever you turn.

A young boy once had a very vivid dream that he remembered for the rest of his life. His name was Fareeduddin Shah, and he was born in Kathiawar. He later became known as Kareem Baba. In that dream, he saw a vessel of light being pulled into the sea by some spiritual people. He often wondered who they were and desired to find out.

Fareeduddin Shah Taji (Kareem Baba)

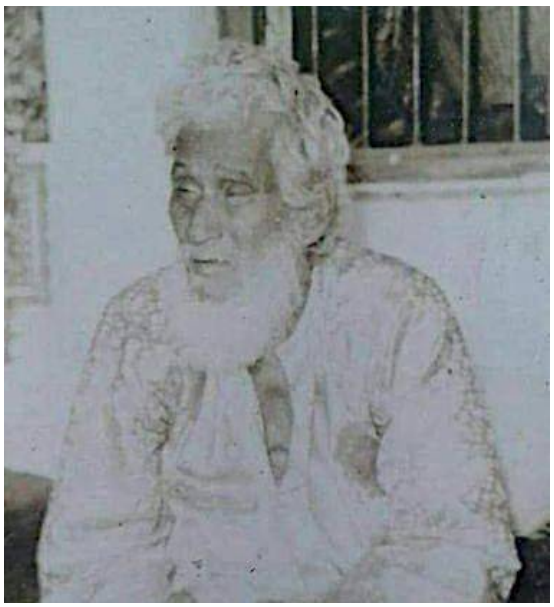
One day, he happened to join a caravan heading for Nagpur with his father. When he arrived in the presence of Baba Tajuddin, he wondered whether the saint before him was one of those light beings pulling the vessel onto dry land. Baba Tajuddin sent a messenger to tell the boy's father that his son was too young and would be called later, so he took him back.

At the age of 11, Fareeduddin wandered in an absorbed state to a *faqeer*, from whom he trained for six months, and paid his respects in Ajmer. Having spent years trading in Africa, he married an Arab lady, but his desire was set on becoming an ascetic like Baba Tajuddin. Once, he expressed his desire to spend time in his company, whereupon he was instructed from afar to spread his shirt. Baba Tajuddin placed the Quran on it and marked out a verse stating that God is to be found wherever you turn. Baba Tajuddin then put a *mithai* in his hand and blessed him with gnosis. Many terminally ill patients were cured at his hands. He spent the rest of his life in spiritual service. [See also Within the Mirror]

No More Restraints

Baba Tajuddin recognised Ali Shah immediately as a saintly person and ordered for the restraints on him to be removed... He initiated him and gave him the title of 'Insan'.

A young child born in Chhatisgarh and named Ali Shah was orphaned when he was just one month old. He was looked after by his maternal grandparents. He was kept restrained when he was a young man due to his frequent bouts of *majzubiyat*. No one considered him to be normal like other people until a great saint recognised and liberated him.



Insan Ali Shah Taji

Ali Shah was devout and inwardly inclined from an early age. Although he ate and dressed well, he did not indulge in the luxuries of life despite the lands he inherited. His life was shattered further when he got married. His wife gave birth to a daughter who died, and she too passed away in this sorrow. He remained a calm and quiet person, fond of solitude and *muraqba* on a mountaintop and other natural places. However, when he started experiencing intoxicated states in his twenties, people restrained him and took him to various places for treatment, thinking that he was mentally sick. Eventually, they took him to Baba Tajuddin in Nagpur.

Baba Tajuddin recognised Ali Shah immediately as a saintly person and ordered for the restraints on him to be removed. With Baba Tajuddin's blessings, he became composed, and his thinking pattern was aligned harmoniously. After a period of training in which Baba Tajuddin instructed him to go to Madras and return to Nagpur by surviving through begging, he initiated him and gave him the title of 'Insan', hence his full name, Insan Ali Shah. He helped people deal with various problems and also amazed them with many miracles.

Spiritual Wealth

"Gain the spiritual wealth you seek... You should prepare to go there to receive his grace and blessings and be enlightened. It is at Tajuddin's feet, not mine, that you should surrender yourself."

Mother Maryam Bibi Sahiba, often called 'Bi Amma', was born into a family of dervishes and *faqeers* in Kajaleshwar village in the Akola district of Maharashtra. She was one of the five children of Azizuddin and Aisha Bibi. Every child is born according to the natural way of life (*deen-e-fitrat*). If the parents are righteous in their thinking and provide a spiritual home environment, it makes it easier for the child to attain cosmic consciousness, and so it was that Maryam Bibi was able to develop her spiritual abilities. She followed a strict regime of *salah* and *saum* (fasting) and was often absorbed in *zikr*. Although she married, it was for a short period, and she returned to live with her brother Qutbuddin.

Maryam Bibi

It was a family tradition to attend meetings presided over by other saints and serve them. Once, on their visit to meet other family members in Kamptee, they were hosting a *darwesh* named Hazrat Shah Abdul Hameed. The *darwesh* turned his attention to the girl and said:

> *The sun of spirituality has dawned upon Nagpur in all its glory. You are very devout. You will be able to gain the spiritual wealth you seek quickly from there. You should prepare to go there to receive his grace and blessings and be enlightened. It is at Tajuddin's feet, not mine, that you should surrender yourself.*

Tajuddin was then in his last year at the lunatic asylum when Maryam met him [see The Girl who Sought Wealth]. There, he greeted her, emancipated her from worldly attachments, and forged her new spiritual connection. From then on, Maryam Bibi was spiritually connected with her master. As part of her initial training, she was told to stand at a certain spot on the asylum grounds for a very long period while remaining attentive to her master. This made her indifferent to the feeling of hunger. Her training continued for one and a half years, during which time she remained in Tajuddin's presence, whether he was in Sakardara or Waki after his release from the asylum. After this period, Tajuddin instructed her to stay in a deserted spot in the woods in a field of thorns, occasionally visited by wild animals, and left her there alone. Stopping at one point a short distance ahead, he reminded her, "Remain where you are, and do not leave without my permission".

Maryam Bibi showed great endurance in complying with what Tajuddin had instructed her to do. She had no stock of food or water, no concern for her needs, and no sense of any danger of being harmed by wild animals. For seven days, Baba Sahib did not eat anything either. A transfer of thought forms took place while his new *mureed* was fixated in the contemplation of her master. On the eighth day, he came out of his abode and called out to a local farmer named Wakoria. When he arrived, he instructed him to give bread to a lady at the spot where he left Maryam Bibi and to assist her from time to time. When the farmer reached there, he found her resting. He called to her, but she did not awaken. In the third call, he told her that Tajuddin had sent him. Thereupon, she awoke and took the food sent for her. He then fetched some water from a nearby well. When she had finished eating, he told her that Tajuddin had appointed him to be at her service.

The farmer later learned that Baba Tajuddin himself only ate after Maryam Bibi had first eaten. As advised by the master, he then told her to reside at a lodging in one of his plots to make it easier for him to assist her, to which she agreed. Tajuddin also occasionally visited her there and sometimes took her on his tours, including Sakardara, before returning. After some days, Tajuddin ended this period of training and awarded her the spiritual wealth she was promised. She finally gained what she sought. She described her period of training as follows:

> *With the blessing of my spiritual master, I completed a journey of years in a matter of days. He hastened and eased*

what would have taken years to complete and opened the door of wilayat (friendship with God) for me.

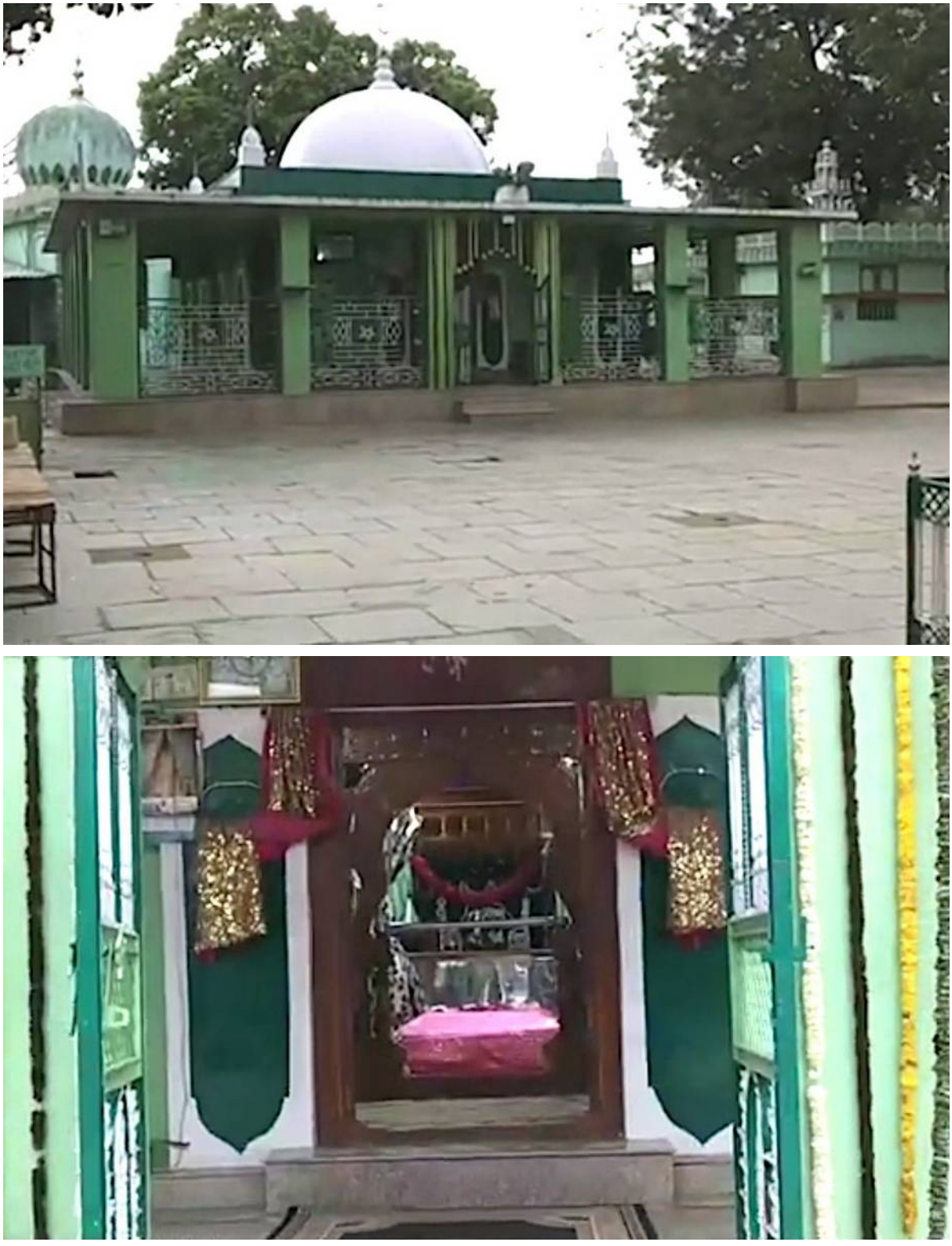
Maryambi became so enlightened and connected to the divine that she would repeat things her master would say in his own lodging. Over time, Baba Tajuddin sent thousands of needy people to her, and she performed many miracles of her own. They included patients declared incurable by doctors, such as a girl who suffered from kidney dysfunction, a boy with liver disease on his deathbed, and a boy with blood cancer. A miraculous recovery occurred in all such cases. Once, an expert in physiognomy visited her and was so lost in thoughts for a considerable period that it caught the attention of others around him. When Qutbuddin asked what happened, he revealed:

The status of Maryam Amma is so high that she is blessed beyond my comprehension.

Baba Tajuddin treated Maryambi as his mother and called her 'Maryam Bi Amma'. When certain people came to Baba Sahib directly, he often advised them to first go and "meet Maryam Amma" before visiting him. Due to her immense piety, he always respected and paid heed to her suggestions [see Leaves that Turned into Insects]. He was usually in a good mood whenever she was around. Maryam recommended that in order to be great spiritually, one should stay away from lies and strive to gain first-hand experience to gain true knowledge instead of relying solely on others' observations. At the same time, she was in favour of people achieving excellence in worldly skills alongside mastering the spiritual sciences. She advised spiritual seekers to willingly undergo tests, which she explained by saying:

Travellers on the spiritual path should be like the wind, which can pass through both flowers and thorns.

Maryam Bibi's death in 1920 was one of the reasons Baba Tajuddin permanently relocated from Waki to Sakardara that year [see From a Prison to a Palace]. Her *darbar* in Kamptee is near the Kanhan River.



Darbar of Maryam Amma Sahiba, present-day external view (top); an open view looking towards her tomb (bottom)

The Boy from Vizianagram

It was apparent that Qadir Shah was one of the lights lit by Baba Tajuddin. Many people flocked to him. He cured many of them during his earthly life.

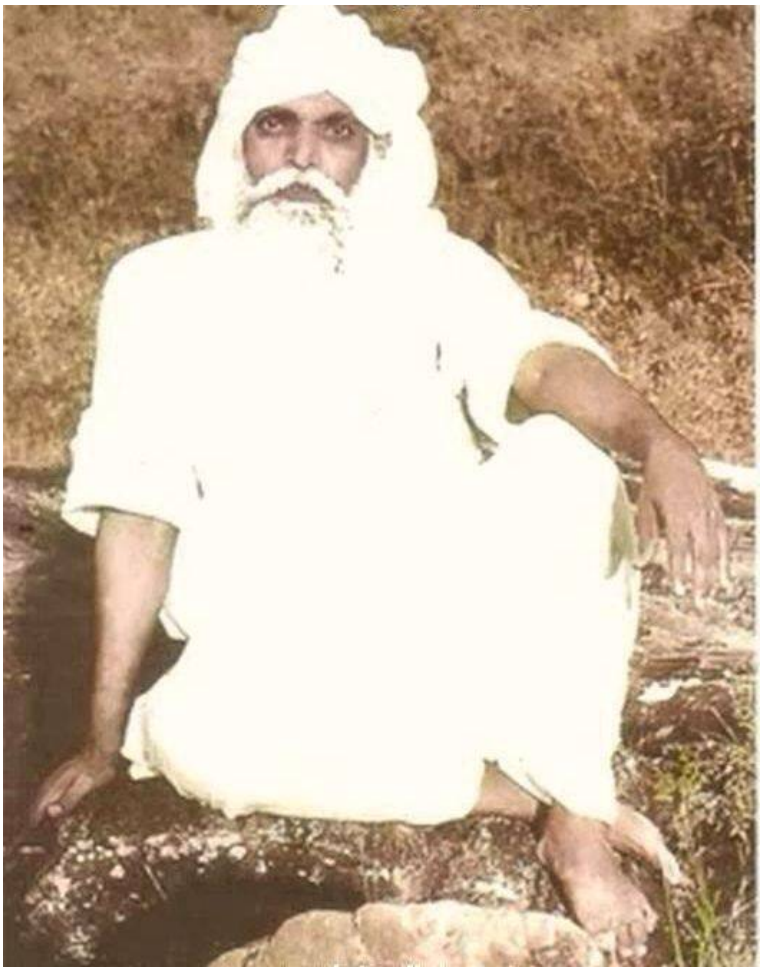
Qadir Shah was born into a pious family of royal descent from the Nawabs of Trichinapalli in Vizianagaram, Andhra Pradesh. His ancestors were pious and devout. He was under divine protection, even as a baby. Once, he was saved from a ferocious cobra by a mongoose, and once, he was left sleeping in a hut that was the only one saved from a fire that burned down all neighbouring huts. Anyone who tried to be cruel to him suffered almost immediate retribution, and as a young child, he was capable of dispelling ghosts and evil spirits.

When Qadir Shah was a little older, he was indifferent to food, sleep, and other comforts of life. He was so inclined to spend time alone and think deeply about the mysteries of life to learn true knowledge that he left school in the 8th grade. For him, merely acquiring a breadwinning education did not seem right. Tales of prophets and saints fascinated him more, and he spent time pondering over ways to attain inner perfection instead. His father taught him to read the Holy Quran with meaning and explained certain passages to him.

Qadir Shah was also fond of horseback riding. While riding a horse one day, he was suddenly thrown down, and the horse returned home without him. Alarmed at the horse coming back without the boy, a servant quickly ran to where he found the boy injured, bleeding, and surrounded by greengrocers from the surrounding village. From that day on, Qadir Shah never sat on a horse again.

While sitting under a banyan tree on Kumili Ghat Road one day around the age of 15, a *mureed* of Baba Tajuddin, known simply as Hazrat Baba, came into town. Placing his hands on the boy's head, he said, "You will be a great man, and all your desires will be fulfilled". These words aroused his devotion to the saint, and eventually, his mother gave him permission to go to Nagpur. His father was also satisfied that he was destined for a different life role in spite of their flourishing business.

When Qadir arrived at the palace, he had no idea how he would get to meet Baba Tajuddin because there were so many other elders around. So he sat under a mango tree and waited outside. Just then, somebody approached him and asked, “Where is the boy from Vizianagram?” Qadir knew it was him, and the man told him, “Hazrat Tajuddin Baba wants to meet you”. Qadir Shah’s delight was boundless. He thought, “He indeed is a real *murshid* who knows the unexpressed desires of his *mureeds*”.



Baba Qadir Shah

One thing that initially bothered him, however, was seeing the saint heap abuse on his visitors and those who were once running after him in his *baggi*. It made him wonder how he could be a master of spiritual wisdom. After coming back from answering the call of nature, Baba Tajuddin mysteriously appeared before him and demanded to know: “Tell me. Why do you harbour a doubt? Why do you falter like this when there is no scope for any doubts?” Babaji then mysteriously vanished before he could pull himself together.

One night, Qadir saw two big chests in a dream and was given their keys. When he opened them, they were full of sacred books. The boy was quick to understand and learn. He easily earned the love and attention of Babaji, who often made him sit by his side and to whom he revealed some secrets of knowledge. He soon reflected some qualities of his master in himself.

Baba Qadir of Vizianagram

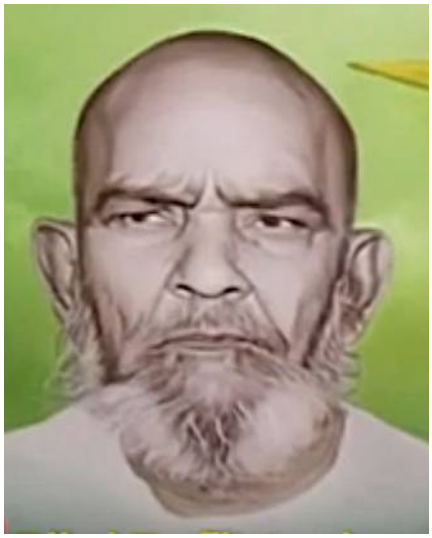
The spot at which he fell from a horse as a child in Vizianagram was where Baba Tajuddin instructed Qadir Shah to build his residence to radiate his spiritual light. He devoted himself to severe spiritual exercises there and soon became well respected. One evening, Baba Tajuddin visited his *khanqah* (convent) with five other clothed, light beings wearing turbans, whom he was unable to serve. Baba Tajuddin anointed his head with oil, blessed him with powers, and informed him that their personalities had now merged so he could call upon him at any time, at which Baba Qadir shed profuse tears of joy. Babaji and his mysterious companions then vanished. It was apparent that Qadir Shah was one of the lights lit by Baba Tajuddin. Many people flocked to him. He cured many of them during his earthly life.

Inside Baba Qadir's darbar in Vizianagram

The Poet Haji

He acquired the title of Al-Hajj because he performed the pilgrimage 20-22 times... Sarwar Shah was so fond of Baba Tajuddin that he would not dare to go inside his beloved's court.

Al-Hajj Hazrat Sayyad Mohammad Sarwar Shah Taji was a renowned poet. It is worth explaining why his shrine is close to Baba Tajuddin's *darbar*. He acquired the title of Al-Hajj because he performed the pilgrimage 20-22 times to which people went by sea in those days. The Holy Prophet (uwbp) instructed him, "*Madinah jaate* (go to Madinah)". This started his series of pilgrimages.



Sarwar Shah Taji

Hailing from Uttar Pradesh, Sarwar Shah departed with the intention to perform hajj. Nagpur was along his route, and he had heard enough about Baba Tajuddin that he desired to meet him. Babaji told him to pause to feed the poor. Just when he distributed all he had and had no more left, an unknown person gifted him with a sum of money. It was more than sufficient for him to proceed to perform the pilgrimage.

Sarwar Shah became so fond of Baba Tajuddin that he would not dare to go inside his beloved's court without permission. Once, when asked why he was standing outside, he said that he preferred it, "*Hoji Faqeer! Bahir hi se mangta* (Well faqeer! I ask from outside)." The following are verses from one of his manqabats:

Baba tere chaukhat par kehne ye ghulam aaya, Han shor zamaane men waliyon ka imam aaya,

Duniya ke gulistan men rang-e-rukh-e-gul ban kar, Baba mere kya aaye rehmat ka nizaam aaya,

Ae Taj numa Baba haan dekhte hi tujh ko, Sajde men huwa saaqi aur wajd men jaam aaya,

Kay naam-e-mubaarak han is naam ke hun qurban, Dil muh pe nikal baetha jab Baba ka naam aaya,

Muddat se tajarba ha wallah mujhe Sarwar, Jab waqt para mujh par Baba meera kaam aaya.

O Baba! This servant has something to say at your entrance, We all know that the Crown of Saints is among us,

As a dignified colourful flower in the flowerbed of the world, Bringing forth a system of mercy such is my Baba,

As soon as we see the Crown of Saints before us, The Cupbearer prostrates, and the goblet is stirred,

Such a blessed name that I may be close to you, Our feelings pour forth from our lips upon hearing your name,

I, Sarwar, speak from much personal experience, As the Baba came to my aid whenever the need arose.

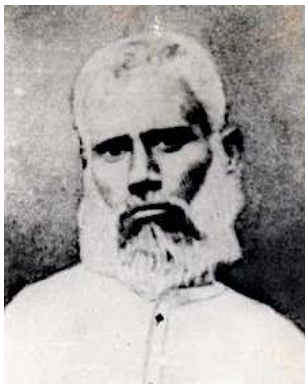
Dargah of Sarwar Shah Taji (behind Baba Tajuddin's darbar)

A signboard at the shrine containing poetical verses (Hast dedaar-e-Khuda dedaar-e-Tajul Awliya...)

Perfect Spiritual Masters

> [Meher Baba] maintained that there are always five perfect masters... on earth. One of them in his time, according to the Parsi saint, was Baba Tajuddin of Nagpur, whom he called the 'Taj'.

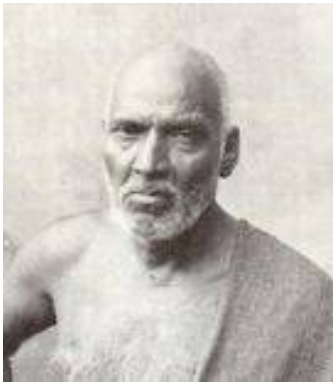
A spiritual master of Zoroastrian origin named Merwan Sheriar Irani, popularly known as Meher Baba (1894-1969), maintained that there are always five perfect masters or God-realised personages on earth. He believed that although there is only one key to the world, it remains in the hands of five perfect masters in every age. He claimed to have identified those present on earth in his lifetime and met and was blessed by each one. He sought and found spiritual perfection in them, so he referred to them as the "perfect masters".



Baba Tajuddin of Nagpur

Sai Baba of Shirdi

Hazrat Babajan of Poona

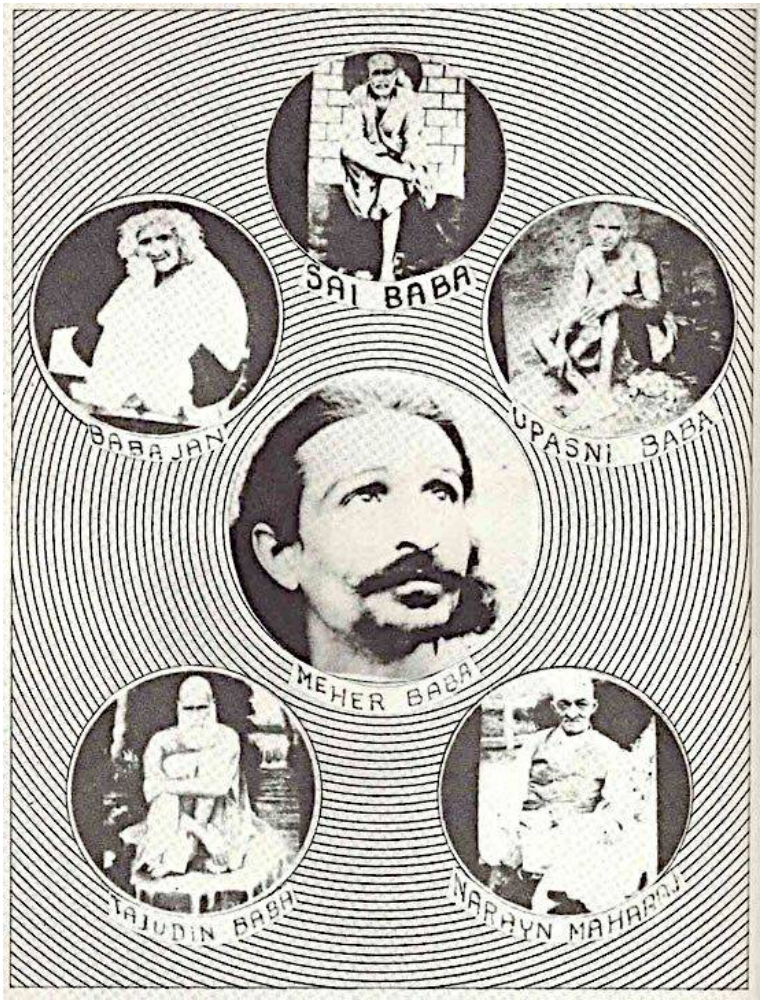


Upasani Maharaj of Sakori

Narayan Maharaj of Kedgoan

The five perfect spiritual masters Meher Baba identified in his lifetime

One of them in his time, according to the Parsi saint, was Baba Tajuddin of Nagpur, whom he called the 'Taj' (Crown). Another, known as Hazrat Babajan (1790/1820-1931) of Poona, was also Muslim, as was Sai Baba of Shirdi (1838-1918), though he had a large Hindu following as well. The two other perfect masters were the Hindu saints Upasani Maharaj (1870-1941) of Sakori and Narayan Maharaj (1885-1945) of Kedgaon.



The Awakener, vol.XIII, no.3–4, p.16 (cover)

Meher Baba was first blessed and initiated by Hazrat Babajan in 1913. She then advised him to spend time with Baba Tajuddin in Nagpur. Meher Baba and Upasani Maharaj, also a *mureed* of Sai Baba of Shirdi, both spent periods of training under Baba Tajuddin's guidance there. He spent six more years of his life under the tutelage of the other perfect masters and the last forty-four in complete silence. He believed that realities are divulged or received in silence and relied on an alphabet board and hand gestures to convey important communications. One thing he advised spiritual seekers to avoid was misusing hallucinogenic drugs because they were not a proper means to gaining spiritual advancement. He acknowledged that all souls are connected and that all spiritual teachings are one in essence. He stressed making people happy and the love of God, saying:

> *To love God as He ought to be loved, we must live for God and die for God, knowing that the goal of life is to love God and find Him as our own selves.*

The Rose-Faced Pathani

At the exact moment around midnight when he passed away on 17 August 1925, she said softly to those sitting near her, with a sigh, "The Master, my poor faqeer Taj, has gone".

One of the four perfect masters of the age was the female Pathani Muslim saint and *hafizah*. She was originally named Gulrukh (rose-faced), but became known popularly as Hazrat Babajan. She was born into a royal Muslim family in Balochistan, Afghanistan. She was naturally aloof and disinclined to play like other children. Her strong spiritual inclinations made her forgo marriage when she was pressured by her parents at the age of fifteen, and eventually, she left to find her spiritual destiny on her own. Her height was low, and she was still a young girl. She spent 13 years in the jungle, visited Peshawar, Lahore, and Multan, and went into seclusion on a hill in Rawalpindi.

Once, she survived being buried alive in a pit in Rawalpindi after being accused of blasphemy by Balochi soldiers. She had uttered words in a moment of ecstasy, connoting her divine state and creative capacities. Along the way, she sought help from a Hindu sadguru, the *qutub* Maula Shah, in Multan. She travelled further and reached Bombay in 1901.

While travelling to Makkah by ship in 1903 on her second pilgrimage, it started raining heavily. She engaged the passengers with lines from Rumi and Hafiz and expounded deep mysteries in simple terms. Then, a terrible storm arose, and the ship was in imminent danger of sinking. But the storm subsided after heeding Hazrat Babajan's advice to collect one *paisa* from each passenger to buy food for the poor in the name of the Beloved Prophet (uwbp). News of the miracle spread far and wide, both at sea and on land. During her return to India via Bombay, she passed through other places as well, including Baghdad.

Hazrat Babajan finally settled further south to spend the last 26 years of her life in Poona, starting around 1904, as an old woman after paying homage at the shrine of Hazrat Moiuddin Chishti in Ajmer Sharif. She often spent her time near shrines of Muslim saints but eventually found an ideal spot for herself near Char Bawdi, where she meditated under a neem tree. It was an oasis in an otherwise unpleasant and dangerous

area. While some considered her a madwoman and some children threw stones at her, others gave her gifts, which she shared among the poor and destitute. Though reluctantly, she allowed her devotees to construct a simple shelter of gunny sacks for her. She ate and slept very little.

Gradually, out of devotion or curiosity, the number of people coming to meet Hazrat Babajan increased. Many of them came to get healed. Her healing miracles included restoring the sight of a blind child and blessing a 10-year-old childless woman with a baby. It was while living in Poona that Meher Baba met her at the age of 19. She referred to him as her 'beloved son' and helped him grow spiritually.

Hazrat Babajan of Poona

Hazrat Babajan never met Baba Tajuddin physically, but once declared Taj as her *khalifah*: "Taj is my *Khalifah*. What Taj gives, he gets from me." At the exact moment around midnight when he passed away on 17 August 1925, she said softly to those sitting near her, with a sigh, "The Master, my poor *faqeer* Taj, has gone". She remained motionless for a while as if absorbed in deep thought or looking numbed by the news. Nobody understood who she was referring to as master. Only the next day, when news of Baba Tajuddin's demise in Nagpur appeared in the papers, did her *mureeds* grasp the significance of the utterance and understand how close their master was to Baba Tajuddin of Nagpur.

The Heavenly Rose

Baba Tajuddin approached him with roses in his hand and waved them over his head and face. Meher Baba then paid homage... satisfied that Baba Tajuddin was one of the five perfect masters...

Baba Tajuddin called the Parsi seer Meher Baba of Ahmednagar his 'Heavenly Rose'. He was mysteriously initiated by Hazrat Babajan in 1913 in Poona. After spending some time with her, she then directed him to spend time with Baba Tajuddin as well. So, one day in April 1915, Meher Baba, who was then in his early twenties, visited Baba Tajuddin in Waki along with his friend Behramji.

Baba Tajuddin, now bald and grey-haired, stood up as Meher Baba entered and gazed at the handsome young man. No words were spoken, so no one else knew what was being communicated. Before his arrival, the atmosphere was tense, and Baba Tajuddin was upset, but now, there was calm, and Babaji's mood became pleasant. Baba Tajuddin approached him with roses in his hand and waved them over his head and face. Meher Baba then paid homage and left for Poona, satisfied that Baba Tajuddin was one of the five perfect masters of his age.

When Meher Baba was again in Nagpur another day, having become a self-realised personage himself and with followers of his own, he revealed to his disciple Sudashiv Patil, "I am also connected with Tajuddin Baba. I want you to take three or four of Upasni's devotees with you to Waki and meet Tajuddin there. Take flowers and fruits with you. Give him my salutations, although I cannot accompany you."

When Sudashiv and his group reached Baba Tajuddin's place in

Meher Baba c. 1914–1915

Waki, they found that he had departed an hour earlier. Disappointed, they returned to Nagpur and told Meher Baba that they were unable to meet Baba Tajuddin. The next day, Meher Baba told them to go again but to leave an hour earlier so as not to miss him. Again, when they reached there, they were told that Tajuddin had just left. This happened for two more days. Each time, they departed earlier so they could arrive earlier, but every time, they were told that "Baba Sahib has just left".

Sudashiv was unwilling to go on the fifth day due to the long *tonga* ride of eleven miles, but Meher Baba insisted and assured him that Baba Tajuddin would be there this time waiting for him. This time, Baba Tajuddin was indeed present. He explained that, "For four days, you have been through much trouble, but today, I was waiting for you to arrive. For the last four days, the Heavenly Rose had been calling me over and also sending you here, but today he didn't, so that's why I'm now able to meet you."

On another occasion, Baba Tajuddin gave Meher Baba a certain instruction that greatly affected his life. He said to him, "Close your eyes and then see God's word". From that time on, whatever Meher Baba saw made him remain silent for the rest of his life.

Once, when Meher Baba visited Nagpur again in 1958, a long time after Baba Tajuddin had departed from this world, Maharaja Raghuji Rao sought his blessing. Meher Baba responded by writing on a slate, which was his way of communicating exact details with others: "You are already blessed by Baba Tajuddin. What more can I do?" Coincidentally, Raghuji Rao died that same year on the 20th of May.

Meher Baba then spent some time meditating in the Tajuddin Hall. Kareem Baba, a chief disciple of Baba Tajuddin, was also present there and was praying silently. He, too, sought Meher Baba's blessing, who then put his hand on Kareem Baba's heart and pointed to a portrait of Baba Tajuddin hanging on the wall. By doing so, his message was that a *mureed* of Baba Tajuddin does not need it if he already has Baba Tajuddin in his heart. Having a perfect master is itself one of the biggest blessings one can have in his life. Meher Baba was blessed by remembering one of the most perfect spiritual masters in living memory in his time.

The Golden Tree

"There is a golden tree there..." He knew his master was referring to another saint in Nagpur... the perfect saint, Baba Tajuddin... Out of love for Baba Tajuddin, he wanted him to describe his experience...

The *faqeer*, Sai Baba of Shirdi (1835-1918), one of Meher Baba's five perfect masters, had a large following among both Hindus and Muslims. He advised everyone to study and apply the teachings in their own respective holy books. His motto, while looking upward, was "God is the Master" (*Allah Malik*). He also often said, 'Everyone's master is the same' (*sab ka malik ek*) and blessed by saying, "May Ram do what's good for you" (*Ramji bhala kare*).

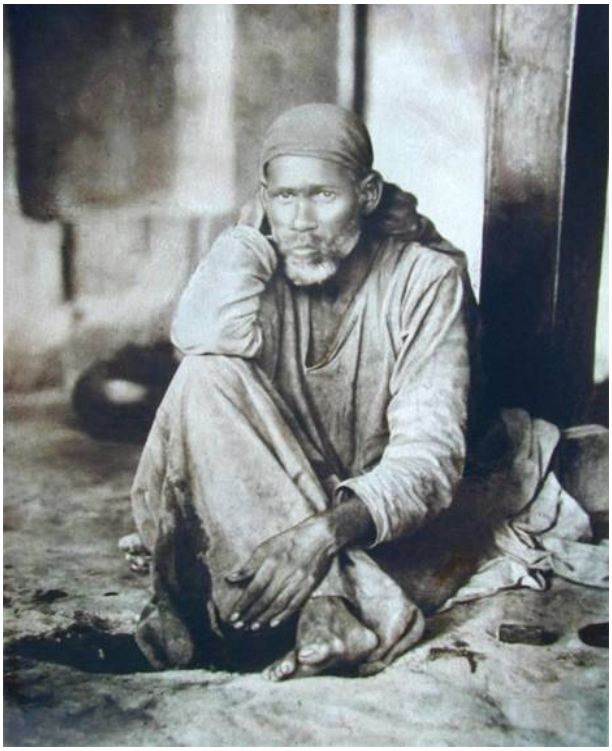
Sai was discreet about his background and being a Muslim. Many Hindus claim him exclusively and worship statues they have made of him. This is something Baba Tajuddin successfully prevented in his own case. One of Sai's Muslim devotees, Abdul Rangari, who kept a notebook of some of the things he learnt, once asked him why he allowed sandal paste to be applied when it is not a Muslim custom. To this, Sai replied, "We have to dress according to where we live" (*Jaise desh waisa besh*). He added: "The Hindus pay obeisance in their own way. I allow them to do it, but I myself am a devotee of Allah."

Born to a poor Hindu couple, Sai Baba was looked after by a childless Muslim *faqeer* and his wife after he was abandoned in the woods. When the *faqeer* died four years later, and the wife could no longer support him, he was handed over to Venkusa (Gopal Rao), a mendicant with whom Sai spent 12 years as a disciple. When his guru too passed away, Sai first appeared in Shirdi to reside day and night under a neem tree that was growing over his guru's tomb. Two months later, aged around 16, he mysteriously disappeared.

During this period that few know about, Sai meditated in the Ellora Caves at Aurangabad under the supervision of the Sufi master Zarzari Zar Bakhsh (1276-1309) in spirit, who was sent there by Nizamuddin Awliya of the Chishti Sufi Order. After engaging in extreme ascetic exercises, spending long periods in *majzubiyat*, and attaining realisation, he returned to Shirdi seven years later. He made his abode in

a dilapidated mosque, which he called 'Dwarkamai Masjid'. Sai Baba, as he later came to be known, was a perfect *faqeer* who stressed *shradda* (faith) and *saburi* (patience). He lived by serving people and exhibiting *tawakkul* (reliance on God). He was an exemplary humanitarian like Baba Tajuddin.

Baba Tajuddin and Sai Baba



Shirdi Sai Baba in Dwarkamai Masjid

The two saints, Baba Tajuddin and Sai Baba were well aware and fond of and close to each other. They sometimes worked in unison. Sai Baba called Tajuddin a 'golden tree' and considered himself copper in comparison. Although there is no record of the two having met openly, it was easy for them to communicate, cooperate, and meet spiritually, irrespective of the physical distance.

For instance, a fire once broke out in Waki Shareef, one of the places where Baba Tajuddin used to stay in Nagpur. Sai Baba put the fire out remotely by breaking an earthen water pot with a stick in Dwarkamai and making certain hand gestures. When the devotees present asked what he was doing, Sai Baba replied, "In Nagpur, Shri Tajuddin's *dargah* (lodging) is engulfed in fire, so I'm helping to put it out". This explanation confused them because they did not know about Baba Tajuddin. The clarity came two days later when one of Sai Baba's devotees returned to Shirdi from Nagpur. He told the villagers about the fire in Shri Tajuddin's dargah and expressed relief in telling them that it had been controlled in time to prevent a major mishap.

The two masters also cooperated in training certain disciples. Baba Tajuddin sent a few of his own to Sai Baba to aid their spiritual development, and likewise, Sai Baba used to say to his own devotees: "Now is the reign of Tajuddin Baba, so go there." Among them were Upasani Maharaj and Meher Baba, who trained under both perfect

masters. Before his permanent *samadhi* (physical extinction), Sai Baba again directed people in need to seek out Tajuddin Baba.

Shama's visit to Nagpur

Shama

Sai Baba hardly left Shirdi physically once he returned from the training period during his youth. But he sent his devotees elsewhere for their training. Among them were one of his closest disciples, Madhav Rao Deshpande, whom he called Shama and to whom he revealed many spiritual insights and secrets, and the saint-to-be, Upasani. Sai Baba also gifted Shama some books since he was a school teacher and often sent him to various spiritually charged places. One day in 1912, he sent Shama to Amravati and Nagpur to attend a thread ceremony. One thing he stressed was to never look down on or speak ill of others, especially a saint or guru. He discussed this once with Shama, with whom he continued the discussion after Shama returned.

Upon his return, Shama went straight to Dwarkamai to meet his master. Sai Baba asked his disciple, "O Shama, which places did you visit?" Shama replied that he had visited Nagpur. Sai Baba asked further, "O Shama, did you go to the south of Nagpur? There is a golden tree there. Did you see it?" It was usual for Sai Baba to speak symbolically, but Shama was quick to grasp the actual meaning. He knew his master was referring to another saint in Nagpur and that it was the perfect saint, Baba Tajuddin, whom they called Shri Tajuddin Baba. Shama replied, "Yes, Devaji. When I was in Nagpur, I visited the Bhosle's garden in South Nagpur and enjoyed *darshan* of Shri Tajuddin Baba."

Sai Baba already knew all the details about his disciple's visit, but out of love for Baba Tajuddin, he wanted him to describe his experience in his own words. After visiting Amravati, Shama had *darshan* of Shri Narayan Maharaj in Bet, a small village in Kedgaon. He described this visit as well. The discussion then led to making the point that "Your guru and father should be treated with love and respect, so do whatever *seva* you can do for both of them. Have total faith in them."

An Inclusive Approach

Tajuddin's devotees were not only Muslims but also a sizeable number from other religions, including Hindus and Christians... Wherever Tajuddin went, people became attached to him.

Tajuddin's devotees were not only Muslims but also a sizeable number from other religions, including Hindus and Christians in particular. His message and approach were universal and inclusive. Notable Christian devotees among them included Sir Thomas McDonald, the military commander of Kamptee [see A Muslim Saint on the Cross]; Sir Benjamin Robertson, the Chief Commissioner of the Central Provinces [see Favours of Sir Benjamin]; Mr Moti, the city superintendent of police; and Colonel Rowe, a civil surgeon at the lunatic asylum.

Wherever Tajuddin went, people became attached to him. When he was in the army, he was a teacher for Williams and Bennis, among others. When he was put in the mental asylum, besides Dr. Abdul Majeed Khan, it was not long before Dr. Kashinath Rao [see A Haji's Hand Revitalised], the second superintendent doctor, and Dr. Pownaskar [see From One Saint to Another], also became his admirers and devotees. Among other Hindu followers mentioned were Narayan Rao Kalamkar [see Majestic and Cobra-Adorned], and Bahadur Prasad Tewari [see Darshan for Sadhus and a Ewer]. Even sadhus [see Half a Banana from a Faqeer], and other religious Hindus, such as Hanumantha

Rao [see In the Bhagavad-Gita] and a Vedantist [see Within the Mirror], counted as his devotees.

Tajuddin's reputation attracted numerous non-Muslim admirers from afar as well. Prominent among them were the Maharaja Sir Kishen Pershad of Hyderabad [see The Maharaja of Hyderabad], Nilakantha Rao of Jabalpur [see The Pot and Jalebi], and Devaji Rao from Madras [see Saying Allah Allah]. There were also admirers in Europe [see Turkey's Victory in War], including an English captain of a ship [see The Matched Tasbih].

Of no less significance is the fact that the two main hosts during most of the saint's life after release from the asylum were two Hindus. Both of them took great care of Baba Tajuddin and left no stone unturned to ensure that he had all the worldly provisions he needed to conduct his spiritual mission effectively. One of them, Dr. Kashinath Rao, the asylum doctor, hosted his master in Waki Woods. He treated Tajuddin like one would treat a holy man by putting flowers on his head, applying sandal paste to his forehead, and performing other rituals. Kashinath Rao was a wealthy man except for a brief period of difficulty [see A Pot of Gold Nuggets]. He died in 1921, one year after his master left Waki to relocate permanently to Sakardara [see From a Prison to a Palace].

The other host, Maharaja Raghuji Rao, the fifth deposed Maharaja of Nagpur [see The Maharaja's Greatest Joy], knew his spiritual master's status so well that once, when Tajuddin deliberately broke an idol in his temple, it did not affect him at all. The Brahmin priests were infuriated, but Raghuji smiled and said, to their shock, "Baba Sahib is also a deity. This is a matter between the deities, so let them settle it among themselves. It would be disrespectful for us to interfere or make a judgement."

This incident demonstrated that the *raja* was truly devoted to Tajuddin and appreciated his depth of spiritual knowledge. The knowledge of the priests was limited in comparison. Their awareness of God was confined to the idol, whereas the *raja's* consciousness was much expanded. He was able to recognise aspects of the divine all around him and thus see the futility of idol worship. Whatever the reason may have been for breaking the idol that day, which was not normal, Tajuddin respected, loved, and helped everyone regardless of their background. His motive was only to remind and lead people to God. Tajuddin himself was impartial in the way he dealt with people of different religions. For instance, he once saved Hindu boys in a hostel from food poisoning [see Six Gulab Jamans].

Another reminder of Baba Tajuddin's inclusive approach is the two flags that remain hoisted at the Chhota Tajbagh Darbar, formerly the Lal Kothi. One flag is in green, and the other is in red. They represent the largest groups of followers. The green one represents the Muslim devotees, and the red one the Hindu devotees. The saint was disturbed whenever there was tension between the two communities [see Communal Strife] and always did what he could to promote mutual respect and harmony.

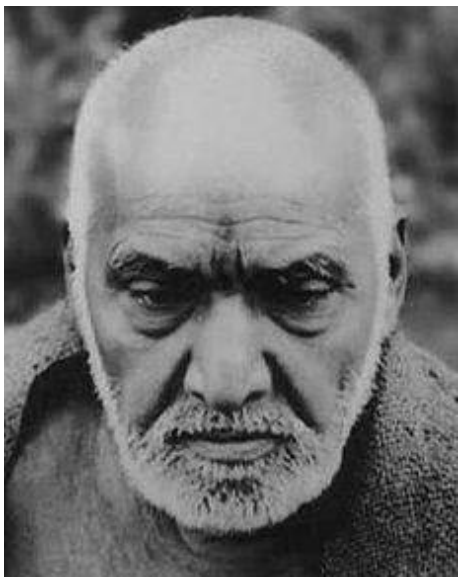
Trained Jointly

The spiritual masters acted in tacit union in the shaping of certain devotees. They worked together in a spirit of harmony and brotherhood... It was not uncommon for these devotees to be trained jointly for the sake of their spiritual progress...

Baba Tajuddin trained many people, some of whom became saints themselves, but there were some who, for certain reasons, were trained jointly with other Muslim and Hindu saints. Baba Tajuddin would send them to his fellow spiritual trainers, and likewise, they too would send certain of their disciples to Baba Tajuddin, either permanently or for a period of time.

The spiritual masters acted in tacit union in the shaping of certain devotees. They worked together in a spirit of harmony and brotherhood despite their religious differences. It was not uncommon for these devotees to be trained jointly for the sake of their spiritual progress, some of whom became spiritual giants. Upasani Maharaj and Meher Baba are two such devotees who were the products of their combined efforts.

Upasani Maharaj



Upasani Maharaj

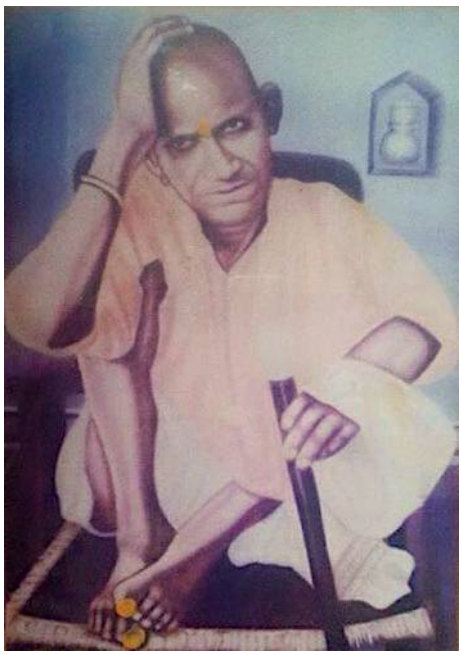
Upasani Maharaj of Sakori was born as Kashinath Govind Rao. He was sent by his own spiritual master, Sai Baba, to undergo training in Waki under the supervision of the Crown of Saints, Baba Tajuddin. He was thus privileged to be trained by both Sai Baba of Shirdi and Baba Tajuddin of Nagpur. Upasani visited Baba Tajuddin frequently in Sakaradara and Waki from 1914 onwards. It helped him gain more spiritual qualities.

Dr. Pownaskar

Another personage among those whom Baba Tajuddin sent to other saints was Pownaskar [see From One Saint to Another]. He was sent for training to Upasani Maharaj, who himself was trained by Baba Tajuddin and Sai Baba. Dr. Pownaskar was first sent to Baba Tajuddin by Brahmachari Baba and became a staunch devotee [see From One Saint to Another]. He was not easily persuaded by a display of miracles, but the greatness of Baba Tajuddin left him astounded and deeply devoted. It was when Upasani Maharaj became accomplished spiritually that Baba Tajuddin referred Pownaskar to him. He was hesitant to leave Baba Tajuddin, but he was assured that he would find signs of spiritual mastership in Upasani Maharaj as well.

Nilakantha Rao and Dhuniwale Dadaji

Like Upasini Maharaj and Pownaskar, Nilakantha Rao of Jabalpur received blessings from multiple masters as well. He was initially a disciple of Baba Tajuddin. However, he also gained valuable advice from Keshav Dadaji Dhuniwala of Saikheda, a Hindu guru who lived under a tree by the River Narmada and kept a *dhuni* (sacred fire) burning, hence his name. Nilakantha Rao was so enamoured with Baba Tajuddin that when he was instructed to meet Dhuniwale Dadaji for further training, he kept seeing his first master, that is, Baba Tajuddin [see The Pot and Jalebi]. Dhuniwale Dadaji had to make Nilakantha Rao realise the universality of saintliness. Nilakantha Rao was blessed further still, as Hazrat Babajan of Poona [see Perfect Spiritual Masters] knew him, too.



Dhuniwale Dadaji in whom Nilakantha saw Baba Tajuddin

Withdrawal of the British

"Yes, they will leave soon... We will no longer keep the British."

Baba Tajuddin indicated a number of times that the British would eventually withdraw from India well before they actually left. One occasion was during the communal violence between Hindus and Muslims [see The Red Turban to End Conflict]. When asked when the English would leave Hindustan, he replied clearly, "Yes, they will leave soon".

On another occasion, a man came who was very concerned about the world's situation at that time, particularly the ongoing tensions and conflicts between Hindus and Muslims. In particular, he mentioned the divide being created by the Congress party on the one hand and the *Khilafat* movement on the other, as well as what, if anything, Baba Tajuddin would say about the British in India. He asked, "What do you say about the British, and what will the system of Hindustan be like?"

In reply to this question indirectly, Baba Tajuddin turned his attention to the future arrangements for his shrine instead. He told him that it would be managed on 'the elephant of Beleram' but that "we will no longer keep the British". An elephant was the insignia of the 8th regiment of the Madras army, which camped at the Bolarum barracks near Hyderabad Deccan. As per this indication of Baba Tajuddin, Hindustan was later partitioned in 1947, and Hindus gained control of the greater part of the country. As for the shrine, the government initially appointed one of its own representatives due to disorder created by some miscreants before management of the shrine was handed over to a public trust.

The Partitioning of Hindustan

> The road was lined on both sides with stones placed a short distance apart to mark its path... they have two parts, just as Hindustan was to be partitioned into two parts.

Besides foretelling the withdrawal of the British from India, Baba Tajuddin indicated on several occasions that Hindustan would then be partitioned along religious lines. A few such indications came through his *mureed* Zaheen Shah, a police inspector named Khwaja Muhammad Hussayn, and a tailor named Abdul Rahman.

Authorisation for Zaheen Shah

Mawlana Zaheen Shah once had a dream in which he saw himself on the road outside a big city that passed right through its centre, dividing it into two halves. The road was lined on both sides with stones placed a short distance apart to mark its path. On one side, the colouring and decoration on the stones made them look like Hindu icons, and on the right-hand side, he saw a newly-built mosque a small distance inward from the road markers. Muslims were gathered in this mosque preparing to celebrate *Milad-un-Nabi*, but some Hindus did not want this celebration to take place.

Zaheen Shah

When Zaheen asked about the reason for their disapproval, the Hindus told him that the mosque was built on the site of one of their idols, so they were not going to allow the mosque to run. He told them the mosque was already built, and that it was neither possible to demolish it now nor for the Muslims to abandon it. He asked again why they were making so much fuss over this. They replied, “There

are so many of us that if each takes one stone of the mosque away, soon nothing would be left".

He then pointed the Hindus to a large number of Muslims who were coming to join in the celebration. At that moment, some soldiers and police arrived, and, pointing to a tank of poisonous gas nearby, said they had enough resources to finish off the Muslims there and then. They threatened that if the gas was released, every one in its surroundings would die. Zaheen Shah reminded them all that it is God's will that determines life and death and that their talk was, therefore, of no use. The Hindus just laughed it off and told him to leave. Their soldiers and police proceeded with what they had threatened to do.

One officer plugged out a tap and released the gas. A companion of Zaheen Shah named Abdul Shakoor, also a *mureed* of Baba Tajuddin, who was nearest to the tank at the time, suffered immediately. His face turned blue, and he fainted on the ground. The Hindus claimed he was dead, but when Zaheen Shah remembered his spiritual master, Baba Tajuddin, he felt two hands on his shoulders. He turned around and saw his master, who appeared beardless like a young man.

Baba Tajuddin then said to his *mureed*, Zaheen Shah: "What you will do will happen. What you say will happen."

These words granted Zaheen Shah authorisation to have the outcome he wanted. So he said to those gathered around him that no one would be affected by the gas who believed it to be ineffective, as God would not allow such a thing to happen. He went over to Abdul Shakoor, who instantly stood up as alive and well as he was before, unaffected by the gas. Zaheen Shah then told the soldiers and police that since they believed in the capability of the gas to kill, they would be affected by it. Just as he said this, those who were convinced it was poisonous had their faces turn blue, and they all fell dead.

At this point, the Muslims coming from afar reached the mosque, and seeing their huge presence, the Hindus ran away. The celebration of the birthday of the Holy Prophet (uwbp) went ahead, at which point Zaheen Shah's eyes opened from the dream state. When he had this dream interpreted by Yousuf Shah, he disclosed that it indicated the country's partitioning, the formation of a Muslim portion, and the ineffectiveness of its enemies.

Posting in Punjab

A police inspector from Amravarti named Khwaja Muhammad Hussayn once came into the presence of Baba Tajuddin and requested for him to pray so that he would be promoted to superintendent. Baba Tajuddin said to him, “It will happen”.

The inspector was happy to hear these words and requested to be posted in Punjab. This time, Baba Tajuddin said it would be against the rules but told him to bring a pair of tongs to see what he could do. With the blessings of Baba Tajuddin, by the next time Muhammad Hussayn came, he was a captain, and moreover, he was reposted in Nagpur. As per Baba Tajuddin’s instruction, he brought a pair of tongs and handed them over to the saint. When Baba Tajuddin took hold of the tongs, he got up, placed them on his shoulders, moved around, and would alternately place them in his hands and then on his shoulders again. After a while, Baba Tajuddin returned the tongs to the man and assured him once more, “It will happen, but it will take time”.

In those days, it was not possible for officers in the central provinces to be posted in Punjab. It was only in 1947, when Pakistan came into being and the man expressed his preference to migrate that he was able to go to Punjab. The reason why Baba Tajuddin asked for a pair of tongs was that they have two parts, just as Hindustan was to be partitioned into two parts.

Horses of paper

Thirty years later, a tailor in Nagpur by the name of Abdul Rahman was told by Baba Tajuddin to migrate to where “paper horses will run”. At this instruction, he migrated to Karachi and lived in a place that, after Pakistan was created, was close to its printing press for currency notes.

Shaad Iqbal

Allama Iqbal was always eager to seek the company of spiritually inclined people. After hearing about the virtues and blessings of Baba Tajuddin of Nagpur through the Maharaja, he expressed his desire to meet the saint...

The Muslim philosopher and poet Allama Muhammad Iqbal (1877-1938) and Sir Kishen Pershad Bahadur Yamin (1864-1940), the Maharaja of Hyderabad Deccan [see The Maharaja of Hyderabad], were very close friends. They corresponded with each other through letters. These were later collected by Dr Muhiyuddin Zor in a collection titled 'Shaad Iqbal'.

As an initiate in the Qadri Sufi Order, Allama Iqbal was always eager to seek the company of spiritually inclined people. After hearing about the virtues and blessings of Baba Tajuddin of Nagpur through the Maharaja, he expressed his desire to meet the saint in a letter addressed to his friend on 11 October 1921:

> *There is a certain respected buzurg, Mawlana Tajuddin, in Nagpur. I wonder if you have ever met him or had the privilege of meeting him? I heard about him from Hakeem Ajmal Khan Sahib of Dehli, and also from a dignitary friend in Lahore who has met him in person. Who knows when I will be free from my duties in Lahore? He is related to the Chishti Sufi Order and remains in a state of majzubiat, often for more than twenty hours at a time. I also heard that the door of his blessings opens from two o'clock in the night till the morning. There is a certain Muhammad Ismail Sahib in Hyderabad who is his brother in the silsila. Perhaps you know more about this*

personage already than what I've come to know from these sources? He's definitely worth visiting.

On 27 October 1921, Allama Iqbal wrote another letter to Sir Kishen Pershad in which he expressed similar sentiments:

Thank you for the kind favour of sending me your travelogue, in which you detailed your visit to Nagpur. I am most grateful for that. I read the small book with great delight and fascination. My heart has attained spiritual satisfaction from my faith in him. I intend to present myself at his service. For some reasons, it becomes necessary to renew one's pledge. I know he is a majzoob, but it is an age of istighraq. Anyhow, if it is in my destiny, then God-willing, he will resolve all difficulties.

The great esteem in which Allama Iqbal held Baba Tajuddin was apparent from his special request for a reply. Allama Iqbal was fortunate that the Maharaja was able to inform him more about Baba Tajuddin. On 11 October 1922, Allama Iqbal wrote to Kishen Pershad, this time to tell him about the message he sent to Baba Tajuddin and request that he receive the reply. The Maharaja replied:

You have informed me that I will receive the reply to your letter sent to Shah Tajuddin Sahib. I shall wait to receive it... Is it so that some orders and predictions made by Tajuddin Baba have yet to occur?

The following day, Allama Iqbal again wrote to Kishen Pershad to inform him: "This is to inform you that I wrote to Hazrat Tajuddin again last night." The Maharaja replied: "I received a word from Baba Jamaluddin (a *mureed* of Baba Tajuddin), telling me to call you over, so make the necessary preparations for a meeting with him."

In the third letter, dated 1 November 1922, Allama Iqbal wrote to Kishen Pershad about his sentiments in regard to Baba Tajuddin:

The message from Baba Tajuddin may be considered the fulfilment of my wish, so when you receive it, please go to the court of the beloved now without delay. Whatever Sarkar has stated about Jamal Sahib is right, and about his message reaching me, it shows sincerity.

Sir Kishen Pershad wrote back to Allama Iqbal on 19 November:

> *The day I wrote to you as instructed by the Crown of the Nation and Faith (Baba Tajuddin), that day, or perhaps the day after, Baba Jamaluddin came here from Nagpur. He confirmed what I told you already, and the same has been intimated. If Hazrat had instructed me as such, it would be necessary to turn to inner means; otherwise... many issues would arise.*

Baba Jamaluddin stayed for two or three days before leaving, and he promised to convey the message to Baba upon reaching there. The point about how to achieve his goal was reiterated in another letter:

> *Dear Iqbal, when the Crown of the Nation and Faith (Baba Tajuddin) kindles his inner passions, only then would it be possible to pay homage to him. Whereas, I see your attempts to meet him are based only on outward means, and you neither come here nor call me over. Hazrat Baba Sahib is a master of the inner realms. You may like to reconsider your approach in this matter.*

On 13 March 1923, Kishen Pershad mentioned to Allama Iqbal a visit to Nagpur made by one of his administrators, Sayyad Sadiq Hussayn Ghabbar. Sadiq stayed there for sixteen days and described his experience as amazing. Whilst there, he wired to inform him that he had managed to pay homage to Baba Tajuddin. On knowing what he did, Baba Tajuddin took the wire, wrote something on it, hung it on a mango tree, and said "*Allahu Akbar*" three times. He then wore a red cap. All this can only be understood by someone familiar with the symbolism. Sadiq also noted that not a single minute passed during his stay when Baba Tajuddin was seen alone because of the large number of people present around him. By this time in Baba Tajuddin's life, there was always a huge gathering of men and women.

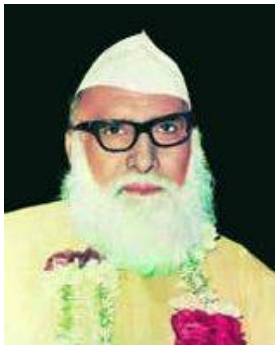
In a letter dated 24 March 1923, Kishen Pershad mentioned to Allama Iqbal that he had been called after Ramadan, and on 14 May, he wrote about another trip of Sayyad Sadiq Hussayn to Nagpur. While praying, Baba Tajuddin told him that his eye was fine and said, "Khwaja Parshad is a devotional *raja*. I am with him, and he is with me." Baba Tajuddin was referring to the Maharaja, whose one eye was injured, making him unable to see clearly. Despite several attempts, his sight could not be restored, but he was blessed after this meeting with Baba Tajuddin.

Instructions to Migrate

Baba Tajuddin instructed a few of his disciples and devotees to migrate to continue the mission of the Taji Sufi Order in the new Muslim country... Baba Tajuddin's own supervision continues... he is sometimes sighted by people fortunate enough to be blessed.

After Pakistan came into being in 1947, Baba Tajuddin instructed a few of his *mureeds* and other devotees to migrate to continue the mission of the Taji Sufi Order in the new Muslim country. Among them were Yousuf Shah [see The Key to Baba Sahib's Treasure], who was sent first, and Zaheen Shah. When Yousuf Shah passed away soon after, Baba Tajuddin instructed Qazi Amjad Ali Shah to migrate in November that same year of the partitioning of India and Pakistan.

Yousuf Shah Taji



Zaheen Shah Taji

Qazi Amjad Ali

Qalandar Baba Awliya

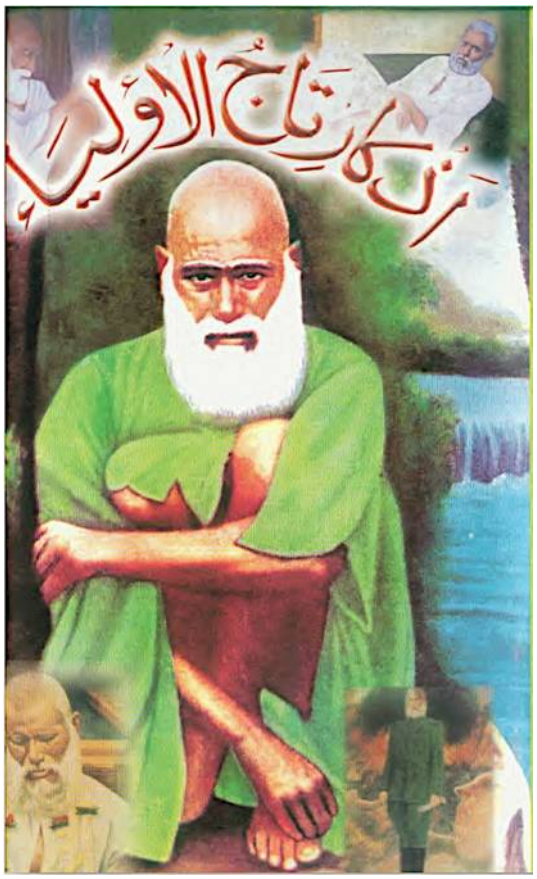
Key members of the original team that migrated to Pakistan

Yousuf Shah and Zaheen Shah were both scholars of high repute besides being Sufis. Amjad Ali's wife, Khairun Nisa, passed away in India when called by Baba Tajuddin in a dream 18 days after reaching Pakistan. She was buried in Tajabad as "Pakistani Amma". The following year, Qalandar Baba Awliya also joined the migrants from India. He arrived by ship from Bombay, settled in Pakistan, and supported the order's mission prior to establishing his own Azeemi Sufi order in 1960 [see Silsila Azeemia].

In Pakistan, the work of the Taji Sufi Order continues under these noble representatives, as Baba Tajuddin himself arranged. Zaheen Shah wrote

Tajul Awliya, and Amjad Ali authored the hagiography 'Azkar-e-Tajul Awliya' in honour of their master in Pakistan. Zaheen Shah and another prominent figure, Albale Shah Yousufi, were instrumental in spreading the Taji Sufi Order in Pakistan. Amjad Ali's descendants are also taking care of the mission as the Tajia Amjadia Sufi Order. *Langar* and other forms of assistance are given regularly. Recent accomplishments include making the government allow *urs* trips to Nagpur and the construction of an orphanage and *madrassah* for spiritual teachings.

Baba Tajuddin's *urs* has been celebrated in India since 1926 and in Pakistan since 1947. *Langar* (victual) is distributed, and the order has supported orphans, educational projects, and other welfare activities. What might seem strange to some, however, is that Baba Tajuddin's own supervision continues in both countries and even more so that he is sometimes sighted by people fortunate enough to be blessed by such sightings.



Azkar-e-Tajul Awliya by Qazi Amjad Ali Shah (book cover)

Tombstone of Sayyad Amjad Ali Shah in Liaqatabad, Karachi

Sightings in Pakistan

The faqeer introduced himself as 'Baba Tajuddin of Nagpur'... Baba Tajuddin's blessings continue even after his physical departure from this world... Baba Durrani told her that the malang was none other than Baba Tajuddin of Nagpur.

Although Baba Tajuddin physically passed away from this world in 1925, several people have reported a number of post-departure sightings. Some of these were in present-day Pakistan, including Karachi and Lahore.

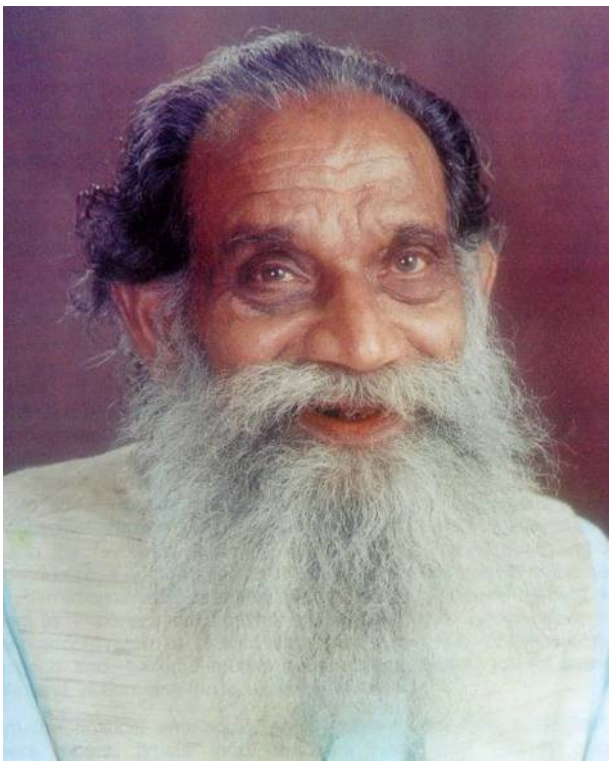
Baba Tajuddin in Karachi

Once, a professor stood up at the shrine of Baba Yousuf Shah Taji, one of Baba Tajuddin's *mureeds*, situated in Mewa Shah, Karachi, and related his earlier experience while walking along the city streets in a very depressed state. He was in Liaqatabad when a *faqeer* suddenly came near, took out a hundred rupee note, and offered it to him. The man refused to take it, but the *faqeer* insisted it would be a blessing. His compelling style and his need at the time made the professor take the money, but as he walked a few steps away, it occurred to him to at least ask for the *faqeer's* name. The professor turned around and asked, "Babaji, you have done me a great favour. At least tell me your name so that I may remember you."

The *faqeer* introduced himself as 'Baba Tajuddin of Nagpur'. To the listeners at the shrine, the professor mentioned that whatever the *faqeer* said to him that day left an indelible impression on his heart. He told them further that despite the resolution of his financial difficulties, he continued to walk the streets of Karachi in the hope that he would meet the stranger again someday. At the time of receiving assistance, he thought he was merely an old *faqeer*. It was only later that he learnt about the life and status of Baba Tajuddin's time in Hindustan and that Baba Tajuddin had hundreds of thousands of followers. He added that he was telling them his story to show how Baba Tajuddin's blessings continue even after his physical departure from this world.

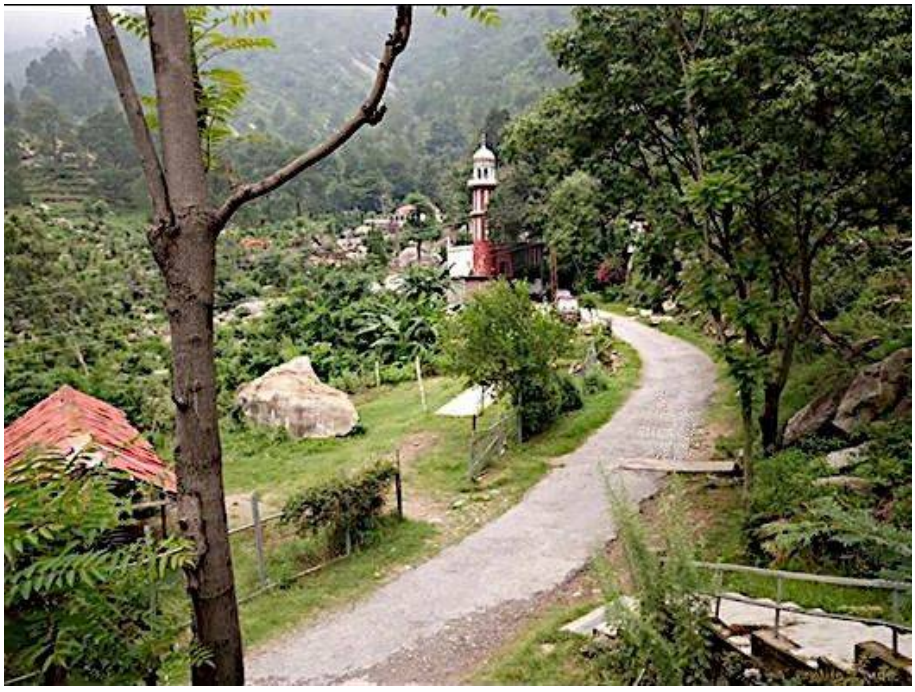
Baba Tajuddin in Lahore

Baba Tajuddin has been sighted in other cities in Pakistan as well. Nasmia Nasir of Peshawar once mentioned going along, when she was a student, with her sister Naeemah Shahnaz in 1960 to meet Baba Professor Ubaidullah Khan Durrani (1907-1990), a *mureed* of the Taji Sufi Order in Qadir Nagar, Swat. During the course of their conversation, she told him about a recurring dream in which a *malang* appeared whenever she felt depressed, and her worry would be gone. Baba Durrani told her that the *malang* was none other than Baba Tajuddin of Nagpur.



Baba Khan Durrani

Later in life, Nasmia was fortunate to meet Baba Tajuddin again, this time physically. This happened while she was visiting the shrine of Data Sahib in Lahore. In those days, she was studying the life of Baba Tajuddin from books about him. She saw a man wrapped in a mantle reclining



Qadir Nagar in Swat, 2017

against the wall of the shrine. Only the man's face was visible, which appeared to glow in white light as he sat motionless with his eyes closed. Nasmia went over to the man and said *salaam* to him. When the man opened his eyes, a strange glee exuded from them, which, though alluring, became difficult to bear. She, therefore, lowered her head and asked for him to make *dua* for her. Baba Tajuddin then placed his hand over the lady's head and said, "Sure".

Baba Tajuddin murmured some supplications, and she thanked him and proceeded on her way. Afterwards, when Nasmia had left the shrine and was on her way back home, she wondered if she had seen the Baba before because he did seem familiar. This thought occupied her mind till she reached home and looked through her books for a picture of Baba Tajuddin. She was astounded at what she saw when she found one because it was exactly like the man who prayed for her at the shrine. She was sure it was the same Baba she had met in person.

Immediately, Nasmia ran out of the house and headed straight back to the shrine. She looked everywhere around the shrine, but the man was nowhere to be found. She visited the shrine for several consecutive days, but alas, she was not able to meet or even see that man again. Nonetheless, she continued to receive his blessing through her dreams whenever she felt depressed.

Final Farewell to Hera Lal

"You will always be in front of me, like a driver who sits at the front..." It was the final farewell to Hera Lal, who was being taken to where his master was going to meet him again.

The love of a spiritual master for his disciples is no less than the love of a mother for her children. Whoever surrenders to his guide is taken good care of as a duty. Since his words are sincere and assertive, all his promises are fulfilled. Like those made to others, so it was likewise for Baba Tajuddin's dear driver and confidant, Hera Lal, who was always eager to meet and take his master wherever he wanted.

Towards the end of his earthly life in 1925, Baba Sahib once revealed to Hera Lal that he would be leaving his body in a few days. Upon hearing this shocking revelation, Hera Lal started crying uncontrollably. Babaji calmed him affectionately. When he regained some composure, he asked his master, "*Huzoor*, under whose protection are you going to leave us?" Babaji promised Hera Lal: "You will always be in front of me, like a driver who sits at the front, and I will remain behind you."

Hera Lal remembered these words for the rest of his life because they were embedded directly into his heart. They gave him immense assurance. In Muharram of 1965, 40 years after Baba Tajuddin's departure, his *urs* procession was moving towards the main square with people shouting 'God is great' (*Allahu Akbar*). Despite the clamour, they heard the cry, 'The name of Ram is truthfulness' (*Raam naam satya ha*) from another procession moving in front of them. Those who remembered Baba Sahib's promise to Hera Lal honoured it by ensuring they remained behind when they came to know that the body passing in front was that of his dear driver. Tears flowed from the eyes of all those who knew what was happening right then in both processions. It was the final farewell to Hera Lal, who was being taken to where his master was going to meet him again.

Respect for Learned People

He always exhibited deep respect for and looked up to any educated person he came across.

Baba Tajuddin laid great emphasis on acquiring education. He was always happy to meet intellectuals, learned people, and students alike, not just those educated in religious and spiritual knowledge but also useful scientific and other worldly knowledge. Although a Shahenshah Haft Aqleem, he always exhibited deep respect for and looked up to any educated person he came across.

For example, Baba Tajuddin had great respect for Hazoor Ashrafi Mian. Once, Baba Tajuddin was sitting among his devotees in a casual state in the Sakardara palace when it came to his attention that Hazoor Ashrafi was coming his way. Whenever this scholar arrived, Babaji would stand up, straighten his clothing to look presentable, and tell others to be ready as well. He would say, "*Hoji, achha hojaate, shariat wala aaraha ha* (Let's get ready. A learned man of the shariah is coming)".

On one such occasion, Ashrafi Sahib asked for any valuable advice before departing. Baba Tajuddin said to him, "*shirk phalta, shariat chalaate* (The problem of associating others with God is spreading, so we should propagate the shariah)". The scholar promised to do something by saying "*Ji sarkar* (Yes, sir)" and left. The people asked what this meant. Babaji told them that a seminary was much needed in Nagpur to deal with the problem of *shirk*. He was very much concerned about children's access to education.

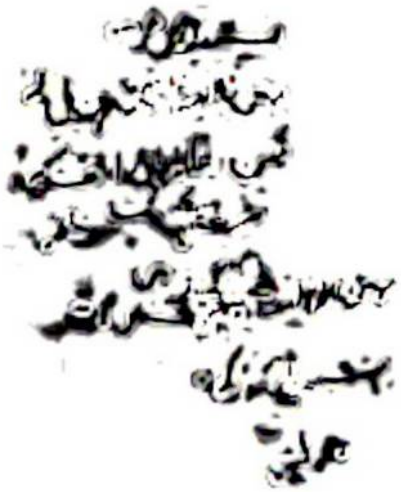
Hazoor Ashrafi approached Mufti Abdur Rasheed to establish a seminary in Nagpur, but he was reluctant to settle in a new area and was already preoccupied with the education field in his home town. The seminary asked for was eventually established under the name of Jamia Arbiya thirteen years after Baba Tajuddin departed from this world. More educational organisations were established later during the 20th century, such as at Hazrat Baghdadi Shah's shrine and the Darul Uloom Amjadiya by Baba Mansoor Shah, a representative of Baba Tajuddin. Some other similar projects included the bestowal of grace from Ala Hazrat (Ahmad Raza Khan Barelwi) as well.

Darul Uloom Amjadiya

Additionally, organisations such as the Khidmat Foundation and Asra Foundation have contributed by also providing hospitalisation and free medical treatment services. This is besides the regular grace from Baba Tajuddin that continues to flow through the giving of *niyaz* and *langar* for the masses.

The importance Baba Tajuddin ascribed to education is evident from an inscription on a rare written *taweez* he prepared for someone, seemingly with the intention of encouraging them to pursue learning. Otherwise, he normally gave a flower as a *taweez*. After the *tasmiyah*, *kalima tayyiba*, an unintelligible line, the first verse of Surah Yasin, and Durood Khizri, and prior to mentioning his name as 'Baba Tajuddin' at the bottom, he wrote:

> *Bahot parho, bahot likho. Read a lot, write a lot.*



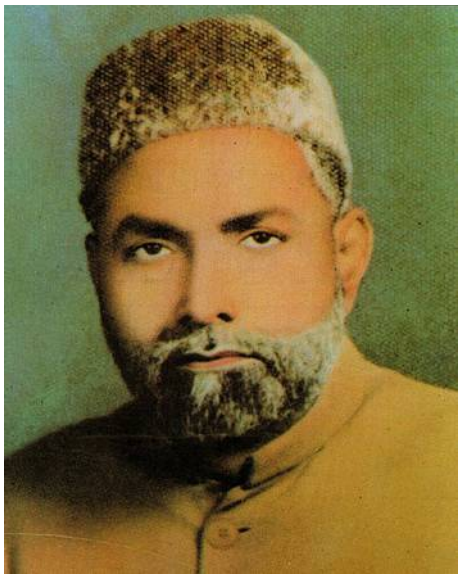
The vestige of a written taweez prepared by Baba Tajuddin

In view of this emphasis on learning and acquiring education, the mission of the Tajul-Awliya and Tajul-Arifeen, the magnanimous Baba Tajuddin, would be significantly supported by promoting his teachings and through educational and other welfare projects. The overall goal on the path of *tasawwuf* should be kept in mind while doing so, which is to find and establish a connection with God [see The Nature of the Ascension and Realising God].

Silsila Azeemia

The urs is also commemorated in the Azeemi Sufi Order worldwide by gathering to remember his life, teachings, lessons, miracles, and spiritual blessings on... 17 August every year.

The Taji Sufi Order, named after the Crown of Saints, Baba Tajuddin, has shrines and a complex in Nagpur. It also has a presence in Karachi after a few of his *mureeds* migrated there [see Instructions to Migrate]. Devotees in this order celebrate his *urs* in the traditional way, according to the Muslim lunar calendar, on the 26th and 27th of Muharram. The *urs* is also commemorated in the Azeemi Sufi Order worldwide by gathering to remember his life, teachings, lessons, miracles, and spiritual blessings on the Gregorian calendar date of 17 August every year.



Qalandar Baba Awliya

Silsila Azeemia was founded by Qalandar Baba Awliya, the maternal grandson of Baba Tajuddin, who is himself a renowned Sufi saint. While he was a child and called Muhammad Azeem, he was privileged to spend several years in his grandfather's presence, from whom he received special training. It is by virtue of him that Baba Tajuddin is well aware of Silsila Azeemia as well. Some miracles, wonders, and mystical sayings of Baba Tajuddin were noted and explained in his writings [see Spiritual Insights]. Baba Tajuddin's divine grace thus continues to flow through this avenue as well and reach his ever-growing devotees. Some Azeemis have even been blessed by witnessing and conversing with him. His supervision continues because such people are liberated from time and space. The physical passing of a saint does not mean their supervisory powers cease.

Based on what Qalandar Baba Awliya told him, the present head of the Azeemi Sufi Order, Khwaja Shamsuddin Azeemi, revealed that a saint like Baba Tajuddin appears approximately every 3,500 years. Their

initial years are spent absorbed in God, and when they regain worldly awareness, they pour out their love in serving God's creation to alleviate suffering. Such people are true vicegerents of God on earth, and their powers of *tasarruf* (spiritual empowerment) do not cease after their physical departure. Since God does not discriminate, neither do they when dealing with humanity. This desire to serve selflessly and without discrimination was very strong in Baba Tajuddin.

Qalandar Baba Awliya further revealed that Baba Tajuddin had reached the point where he was able to completely imbibe from the four streams that feed light throughout the universe. He was thus able to benefit from their unobstructed flow without wasting a drop. It aligned him with all levels of existence and enabled him to dispense spiritual grace freely, as he did. This shows the magnitude of his greatness and explains how he was able to help others magnanimously, graciously, and effortlessly. Moreover, due to his closeness to Prophet Muhammad (uwbp), he enjoyed the privilege of never having a request refused in coming to the aid of a devotee.

Khwaja Shamsuddin Azeemi delivering a lecture on Nana Tajuddin Nagpuri (ra)

As for how Baba Tajuddin was able to obtain detailed information, he would often go into *istighraq*, a state of deep spiritual absorption. There would be dead silence as people waited for him to come back with worldly attention and reveal something. As inheritors of prophetic knowledge, the sole purpose of those who seek to progress spiritually is to make us acquainted with our souls and realise God. This makes him an ocean of knowledge. By diving into it, one becomes aware of the reality and truth of life. In order to understand it, however, it is necessary to have an extensive view of his teachings and grasp the important points of spiritual knowledge. It is imperative to follow in his footsteps to benefit further from his grace and blessings, as with any other friend of God.

Reference and Sources

Foreign Words

aanaa – 1/16 of a rupee; an anna
'adaalat – court
adwaita – oneness
ahle-e-hadith – a Muslim sect averse to Sufism
ameen – amen; lit. 'so may it be'
amma - mother
aseb – lascivious jinn
assalamu 'alaykum – peace be to you (Muslim way of greeting)
ayah – nursemaid
azaan (adhaan) – the Muslim call to prayer
baatini – inner, internal
baba – an elderly man
babu – mister
bachhe – children
baethak – sitting room or hut
baggi – a horse-drawn cart or carriage; a light cart usually drawn by a bullock or horse; buggy
Bai – a respectable woman
baji – elder sister
barra bhai – elder brother
basar – vision; inner sight (cf. Nazar)
bazaar – market
beedi - a thin cigarette made from raw tobacco rolled in leaves
bhajan – a sacred hymn or song
bhakti – devotion to God (esp. Hindu way)
bhoot bangla – haunted bungalow (haunted by ghosts)
biddat – innovation, particularly in religious matters
brahman – God as the absolute reality and ultimate cause (in Hinduism)
brahmin - of the highest, priestly class
bulbul – nightingale
buzurg – a respected elder
chaawal – rice
chadar – a cover sheet, as when placed over a tomb
chhohta – small
chilla – a 40-day seclusion period of spiritual exercises and divine worship
chilla ma'kusa – spiritual exercise of hanging upside down
chiragh – lamp
chironji – cuddapah almond
daal – lentil
dam – conferral of a blessing though the breath by blowing after an incantation
darbar – noble court; a saint's meeting place; shrine
dargah – a saint's lodging; tomb
darshan – spiritual vision; glimpse
darwesh – dervish
deen-e-fitrat – natural way of life
dervish – see darwesh
dhol – a double-sided drum
dhuni – sacred fire (in Hinduism)
diwaan – minister; a high official in a government ministry
dhikr [Ar] – see zikr
dua – supplication (made with cupped hands)
dukhaan – visible smoke
durood-o-salam/durood shareef – benediction and salutation (upon Prophet Muhammad (uwbp))
Eid-ul-Adha – Muslim festival of sacrifice

Eid-ul-Fitr – Muslim festival immediately after Ramadan

fana – selfhood extinction; annihilation

fana fi… – extinction of one's self-identity in the presence of… (see fana)

faqeer – a person impoverished due to being free of worldly wants

farz – obligatory

Fatihah – opening (see *Surah Fatihah*)

gaari – vehicle; car

gaddi nasheen – a saint's chief clerk, as a successor occupying a seat of distinction

ghalaazat – filth

ghamela – iron pan or container

ghaus – consoler or helper saint

ghayb – unseen

ghayr hajim – non-aggressive (as in a soft *qawwali* – see *hajim*)

ghusl – ritual purification of washing the entire body

gulab jaman – a brown-coloured spherical sweet-ball made of milk, flour and butter

guru – spiritual guide

haal – state of being

hadith (pl. *ahadith*) – a tradition or saying of Prophet Muhammad (uwbp)

hafiz/-ah – one who has memorised the Holy Quran

hajj – Muslim pilgrimage to Makkah

haji – one who has performed the hajj pilgrimage

hajim – aggressive (as in a heavy and enrapturing *qawwali*)

hakeem – sage; herbalist

haleem – a stew made of wheat or barley, meat, lentils, and spices

halwa – sweet

harijan – a low-caste Hindu

hartaal – strike

hazrat – a dignitary

hoji – Baba Tajuddin's peculiar way of saying 'aoji' (now then)

hukka – hookah

huzoor – honourable; a title of respect (lit. presence)

ilhaam – divine inspiration

'ilm-e-ladunni – divinely inspired knowledge

imaamah – headwear designating a certain status; turbans

imaamat – imamate; leading a congregation

imam – a leader of Muslims

istighraq – spiritual absorption; state of deep trance

jalal/jalaal – majesty; loftiness; glory

jalebi – a spiral-shaped, crispy sweetmeat made in sugar syrup

janaazah – funeral prayer

jazb – absorption (see *majzoob*)

jihad – battle, whether outer or inner

jowar – millet

jubba – a long open cloth with wide sleeves worn as a gown by Muslims

kajri – a semi-classical song expressing longing, esp. during the rainy season

karaamat (pl. *karamaat*) – saintly miracle

khalifah – successor; vicegerent; caliph

khalwat – spiritual retreat; solitude

khanqah – Sufi convent

kharba a powdered medicine from the bhadrodani plant

khidmat – serving others (see *seva*)

kurta – a loose shirt or tunic worn in the subcontinent

laddu – a yellow-coloured sphere-shaped sweet-ball made of flour and ghee or butter

lakh – a hundred thousand

Lakshmi Puja – a Hindu festival involving veneration of Lakshmi, a deity associated with prosperity

Lal Kothi – Red Mansion (of Maharaja Raghuji Rao)

langar – victual

lungi – a cloth wrapped around the lower body with the end passed between the legs and tucked into the waist

madrassah – seminary

maghrib – west; evening prayer

mahasabha – a Hindu political movement (lit. Grand Assembly)

majzoob – one absorbed in God

majzubiyat – state of absorption in God; divine ecstasy

malang – unkempt ecstatic darwesh

mandir – Hindu temple

mannat – a vow made to a Sufi saint in return for having a wish fulfilled

manqabat – poetical praising of a Sufi saint

masjid – mosque

mast – spiritual intoxication (drunk with love of God)

maulvi – an expert in Islamic law who ministers others; Muslim cleric

mawlana – respected Muslim learned person (lit. master)

mehfil – gathering

mehfil-e-samaa – spiritual euphony session

memon – a member of a Muslim community that originated in Kutch, Gujrat, and Kathiawad regions

memsahib – European lady

milad-un-nabi/mawlid/mawlood – celebration of the birth of Prophet Muhammad (uwbp)

mi'raj – ascension, specifically that of Prophet Muhammad (uwbp)

mithai – sweetmeat

Muharram – the first month of the Muslim calendar

muraqba – meditation

mureed – disciple (in a Sufi order); seeker

murshid – Sufi spiritual guide

Muzammil – wrapped; 73rd chapter of the Holy Quran

naat – poetical praising of Prophet Muhammad (uwbp)

nagin – a serpent capable of shapeshifting into human form

namaste – Hindu greeting

namaz/namaaz – the ritual prayer prescribed in Islam (salah is directed here)

Nasiruddin – Helper of the Faith

nawab/nawaab – nabob; governor

nazar – gaze; external sight (cf. basar)

nikah – marriage

nisbat – affinity; connection

niyaz – a mass food/drink offering to convey its reward to someone

noor – pure light

paisa – ¼ of an anna, or 1/64 of a rupee (before decimalisation)

palang – a bedstead

pandit – Hindu priest; wise and learned man

pathani – a female Pashtun

peda – a fudge-like sweet made with milk and sugar, and flavoured with cardamon

pehlvan – a stalwart or strong man like a wrestler (who may or may not be one); singing beggars from the Gopal caste who were originally wrestlers

pir – holy man; spiritual carer

puja – Hindu ritual or worship

pulao – a steamed rice dish

pundit – learned person; expert

Qaid-e-Azam – great leader

qalandar – liberated saint

qalb – inner heart (related to faith)

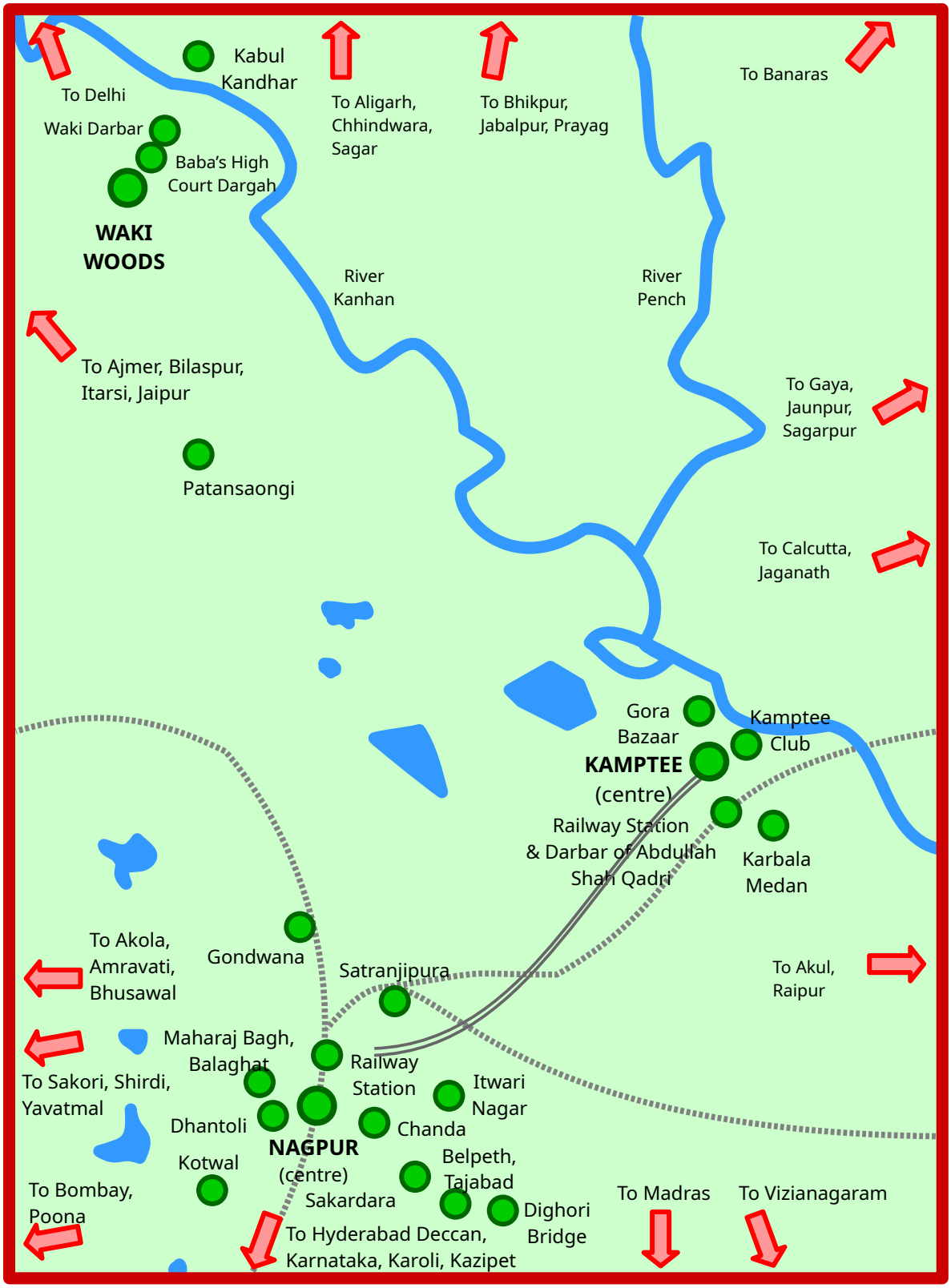
qawwal – qawwali singer

qawwali – Sufi devotional song

qutub – pivotal saint
raja – king
roti – chappati
ruku – bowing
sabr/saburi – patience
sadhu – Hindu ascetic
sajdah – prostration
salah – see namaz
salam/salaam – greeting by saying 'peace be to you' (assalamu 'alaykum); sending peace/blessings on a pious soul
samaa – spiritual euphony session
samadhi – enlightenment, self- or physical extinction
sandal - sandalwood
satya – truth, purity (in thought, speech and action)
satyagraha – non-violent action
saum – fasting
sehri – pre-dawn meal
sepoy – a native Indian soldier serving under British command
seth – capitalist
seva – serving fellow beings and creatures
shabb-e-bedari – nightly vigil (for devotions)
shahenshah – emperor; king of kings
shahi – royal; sovereign; kingly
shahi sandal – sandalwood powder carried as royalty
shariah – Islamic law
shaykh – wise elder; Sufi master
shifa khana – healing centre; clinic
shirk – associating others with God
shradda – faith
silsila – spiritual chain
subadar – a senior Indian officer in a sepoy regiment
subhanAllah – praise be to God!
sulook – attentive state (cf. *Jazb*)
swaraj – self-rule
tahsildaar – tax collector
taj – crown
takbeer – saying Allahu Akbar (God is the Greatest)
taqwa – piety (by virtue of godliness); God-consciousness; intense awareness of God
tariqah – Islamic spirituality
tasarruf – spiritual empowerment; remote influence
tasawwuf – Sufism, Islamic spirituality
tasbih – rosary
tawaif – courtesan
tawakkul – reliance on God
taweez – amulet
tazkiya-e-nafs – self-purification
thumri – a vocal genre involving dance-like movements as dramatic gestures
tonga – a light two-wheeled horse-drawn vehicle
umrah – lesser pilgrimage
urs – death anniversary commemorated on the day of a saint's passing from this world
uwaysi – spirit contact
wajd – ecstatic or enraptured state
ward – rose
wilayat – friendship with God
wird – constant repetition of a holy word or phrase
zabardast – brilliant
zikr – remembrance of God by repeating or chanting His names (dhikr is directed here)

Places

The main places of stay and visit of His Highness, Baba Tajuddin (ra), in Nagpur and the directions of other places mentioned in this book:



Places and buildings

Bombay	Present-day Mumbai (since 1995)
Calcutta	Kolkata (since 2001)
Chanda	Present-day Chandarpur
Craddock Town	Present-day Dhantoli, in Nagpur
Hyderabad Deccan	Hyderabad (in India; since 1948)
India (British India)	Present-day India plus Pakistan, which was carved out of India in 1947 after both gained independence, including Bangladesh which was originally part of Pakistan.
Kabul Kandhar	The Kabul Kandhar near Waki (not Afghanistan) in which Baba Tajuddin had a portal to Afghanistan [see A Portal to Afghanistan]
Karbala Medan	The Karbala ground near Kamptee (not Iraq) [see A Procession to Karbala Medan]
Lal Kothi (Red Mansion)	Demolished but Chhota Tajbagh Darbar built on its new premises, Sakardara, Nagpur [see From a Prison to a Palace]
Madras	Present-day Chennai
Nagpur Lunatic Asylum	Nagpur Regional Mental Hospital (since 1959), Chhindwara Road, Nagpur [see A Haven from the Madhouse]
Poona	Present-day Pune (since 1978)
Sakardara	(or Sakkardara) Chhota Tajbagh
Sorovic	Present-day Amyntaio (Amindeo)
Tajbagh	Within present-day Tajabad (previously Belpeth), Dargah Road, Nagpur

Non-Christian calendars

Milad-un-Nabi	See the glossary.
Hijri	Months in the lunar-based Islamic calendar: Muharram, Safar, Rabi I, Rabi II, Jumada I, Jumada II, Rajab, Shaban, Ramadan, Shawwal, Dhul Qadah, Dhul Hijjah
Shravan	Fifth month in the Hindu calendar

Measures and currency

currency	Stated as R-A-P where R is *rupees*, A is *aanaas* (annas) (16 in one rupee), and P is *paisas* (4 in each *aanaa*, or 64 in one *rupee*), before decimalisation in 1957
length	One *furlong* is one eighth of a mile (approx. 0.2km).

quantity	One *lakh* is one hundred thousand (100,000).

Ritual prayers

fajr (dawn), **zuhr** (midday), **asar** (last afternoon), **maghrib** (evening), **isha** (night), tahajjud (late night, optional)

Scriptural references

Ayatul-Kursi	The throne verse (2:255)
Durood Khizri	A short blessing on the Holy Prophet Muhammad (uwbp)
Kalimah Tayyiba	The declaration that 'There is no God but Allah and Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah".
Surah Fatihah	The first opening surah of the Holy Quran
Surah Yasin	The 36th surah of the Holy Quran
tasmiyah/basmala	The first ayah of Surah Fatihah, also recited when commencing any good deed

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Ali brothers of the Khilafat Movement and Ali brothers when jailed in 1920, courtesy of Vintage Pakistan

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Baba Tajuddin's shahi baggi on display at the Taj Dargah in Tajaba, courtesy of Naseem Shaikh

Baba Tajuddin's jubba preserved in Waki Darbar, Raziuddin Siddiqui, Khoj India

Baggi, original on display at the Waki darbar, courtesy of Shahnawaz Hussain Qadri

Bahadur buried within the Taj Dargah complex in Tajaba, courtesy of Naseem Shaikh

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Present-day signs indicating the direction to Waki Darbar (left) and Tajuddin's Court (right) in Waki Wood, courtesy of Shahnawaz Hussain Qadri
Present-day view of the adaalat, courtesy of Shahnawaz Hussain Qadri
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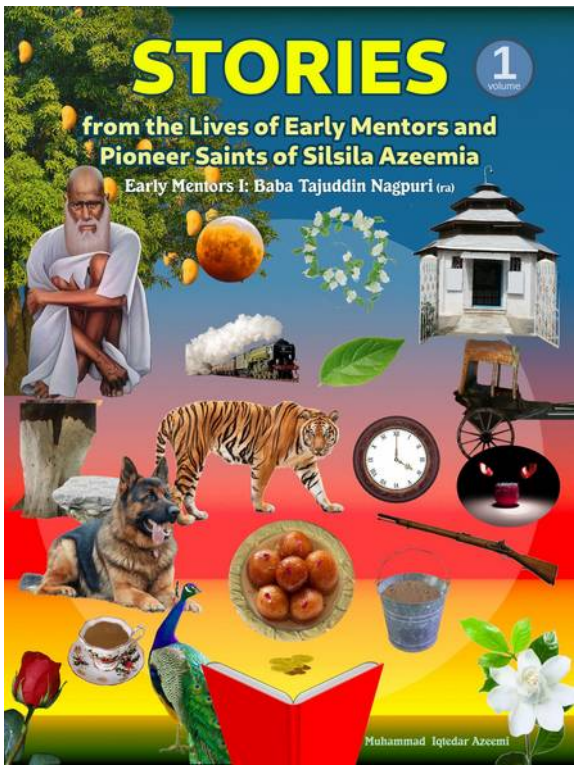
Early Mentors and Pioneer Saints of Silsila Azeemia

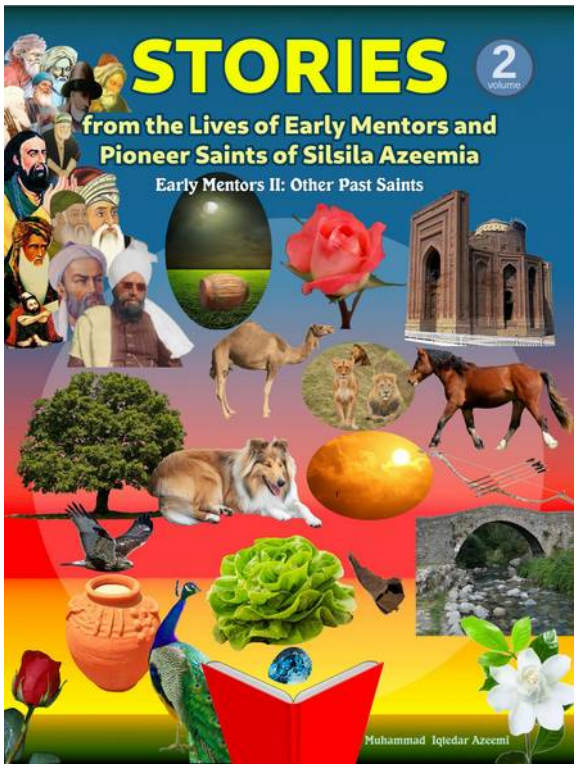


Volume 1 (Early Mentors I: Baba Tajuddin Nagpuri (ra))

Volume 1 covers true stories from the life of Baba Tajuddin Nagpuri (ra).

Baba Tajuddin Nagpuri (ra)

Baba Tajuddin of Nagpur (ra) was the maternal grandfather of Qalandar Baba Awliya whom he trained before Silsila Azeemia was founded. Episodes from his life are included due to his influence on his grandson's early spiritual development.



Volume 2 (Early Mentors II: Other Past Saints)

Volume 2 (Early Mentors II) covers true stories from the lives of Abul Faiz Qalandar Ali Suhrawardi (ra), Shaykh Najmuddin Kubra (ra), elders of Khwaja Shamsuddin Azeemi, and other past saints as mentors in spirit.

Abul Faiz Qalandar Ali Suhrawardi (ra)

Known personally to both Qalandar Baba Awliya and Khwaja Shamsuddin Azeemi, he initiated the former into the Suhrawardi Sufi Order and blessed him with certain spiritual capacities.

Shaykh Najmuddin Kubra (ra)

As the producer of saints and while in spirit form, he trained Qalandar Baba Awliya further after the initial training by Abul Faiz Qalandar Ali Suhrawardi. He blessed him with the capacity to receive

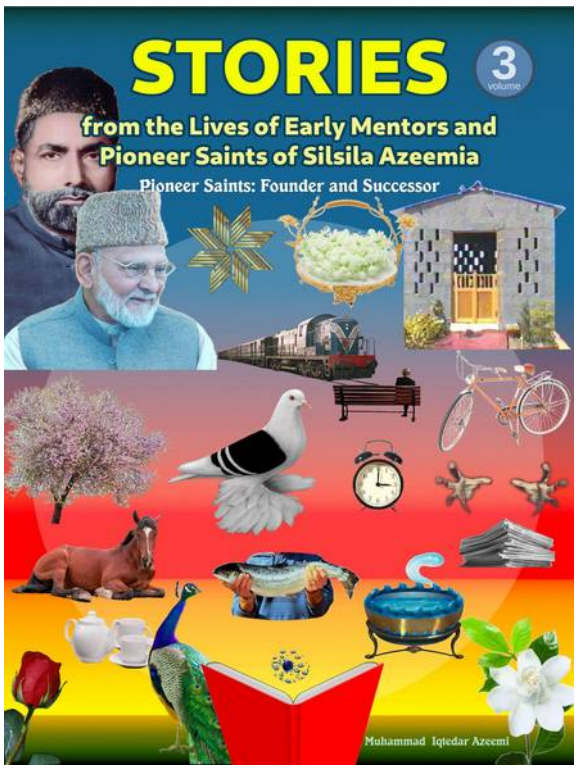
divinely inspired knowledge and prepared him for undertaking cosmic-scale responsibilities.

Elders of Khwaja Shamsuddin (ra)

Certain elders from the Chishti Sabiri and Suhrawardi Sufi orders guided Khwaja Shamsuddin Azeemi prior to his formal and vigorous training under the mentorship of Qalandar Baba Awliya.

Mentors in Spirit (ra) (Other Past Saints)

Certain past Sufi masters, as mentors in spirit from various Sufi orders, imparted further spiritual knowledge, training, blessings and grace to Qalandar Baba Awliya and Khwaja Shamsuddin Azeemi.



Volume 3 (Pioneer Saints: Founder and Successor)

Volume 3 (Pioneer Saints) covers true stories from the lives of Qalandar Baba Awliya (ra) and Khwaja Shamsuddin Azeemi.

Qalandar Baba Awliya (ra) and Khwaja Shamsuddin Azeemi

The two pioneers of Silsila Azeemia are Grandshaykh Qalandar Baba Awliya (ra), who founded the order in 1960, and Shaykh Khwaja Shamsuddin Azeemi, who took charge in 1979.

More Story and Children's Books

More Silsila Azeemia story books for children in Urdu/English:

The Life of Prophet Muhammadﷺ for Children
Miracles of Prophet Muhammadﷺ
The Life of Prophet Adamؑ for Children
Tales of Prophets of Godؑ for Children
Tales of Muslim Saintsؒ for Children
The Life of Baba Tajuddin Nagpuriؒ
The Life of Qalandar Baba Awliyaؒ for Children
A Trip to Paradise: A Spiritual Diary for Children

The first two in the above list are also available in a single book titled 'The Life of Prophet Muhammadﷺ for Children and Some of His Miracles', and the tales as 'Tales of… and their Moral Lessons' in English. This book (True Stories from the Lives of Early Mentors and Pioneer Saints of Silsila Azeemia) includes content from the last three.

Chain of Transmission of Silsila Azeemia

The Holy Prophet Muhammad

(peace and blessings of Allah be upon him)

Qalandar Baba Awliya (Muhammad Azeem)

(may Allah be pleased with him)

Khwaja Shamsuddin Azeemi

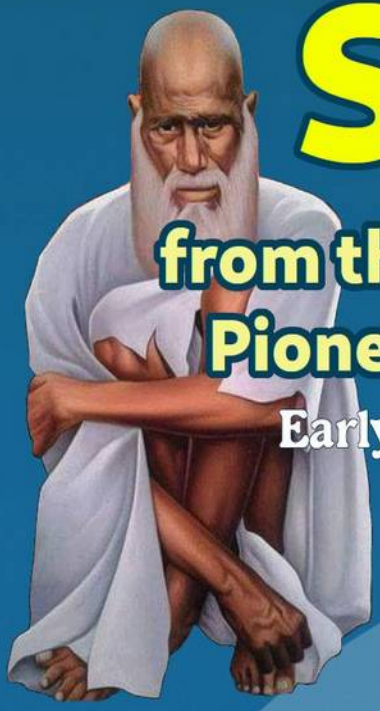
(may Allah exalt him further)

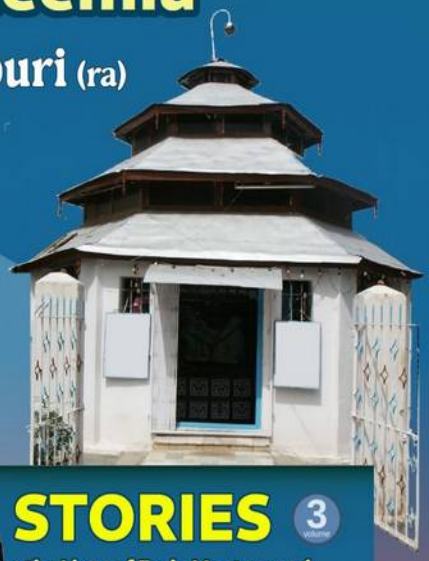
STORIES

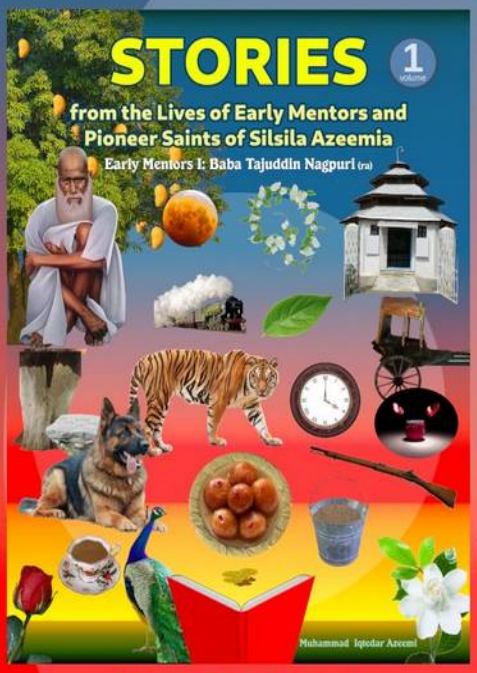
1 volume

from the Lives of Early Mentors and Pioneer Saints of Silsila Azeemia

Early Mentors I: Baba Tajuddin Nagpuri (ra)



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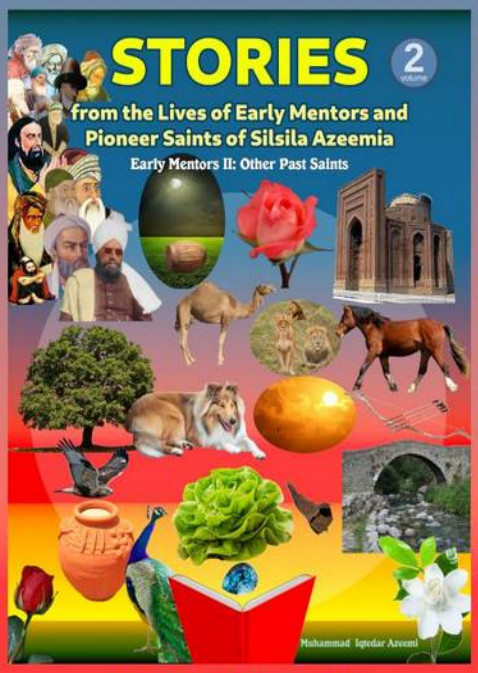
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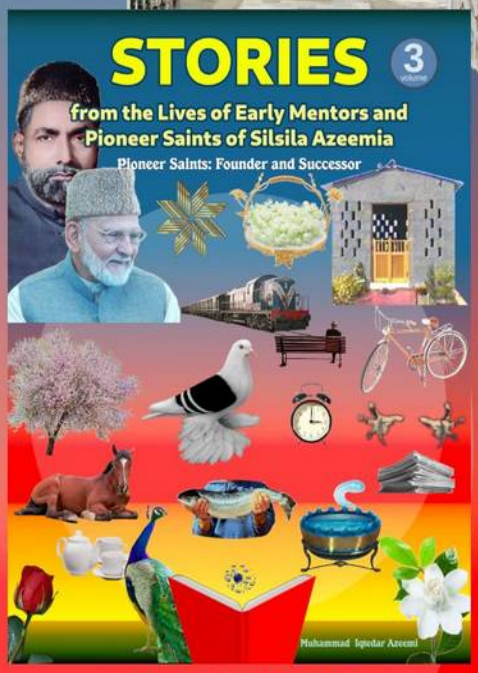
True stories from the lives of other past saints and mentors in spirit (ra)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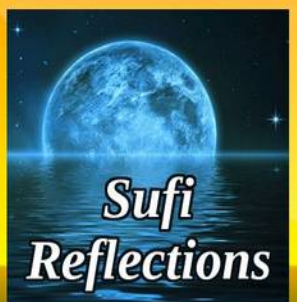
Pioneer Saints: Founder and Successor

True stories from the lives of the pioneer saints of Silsila Azeemia (ra)



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